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Thursday, November 27, 2014

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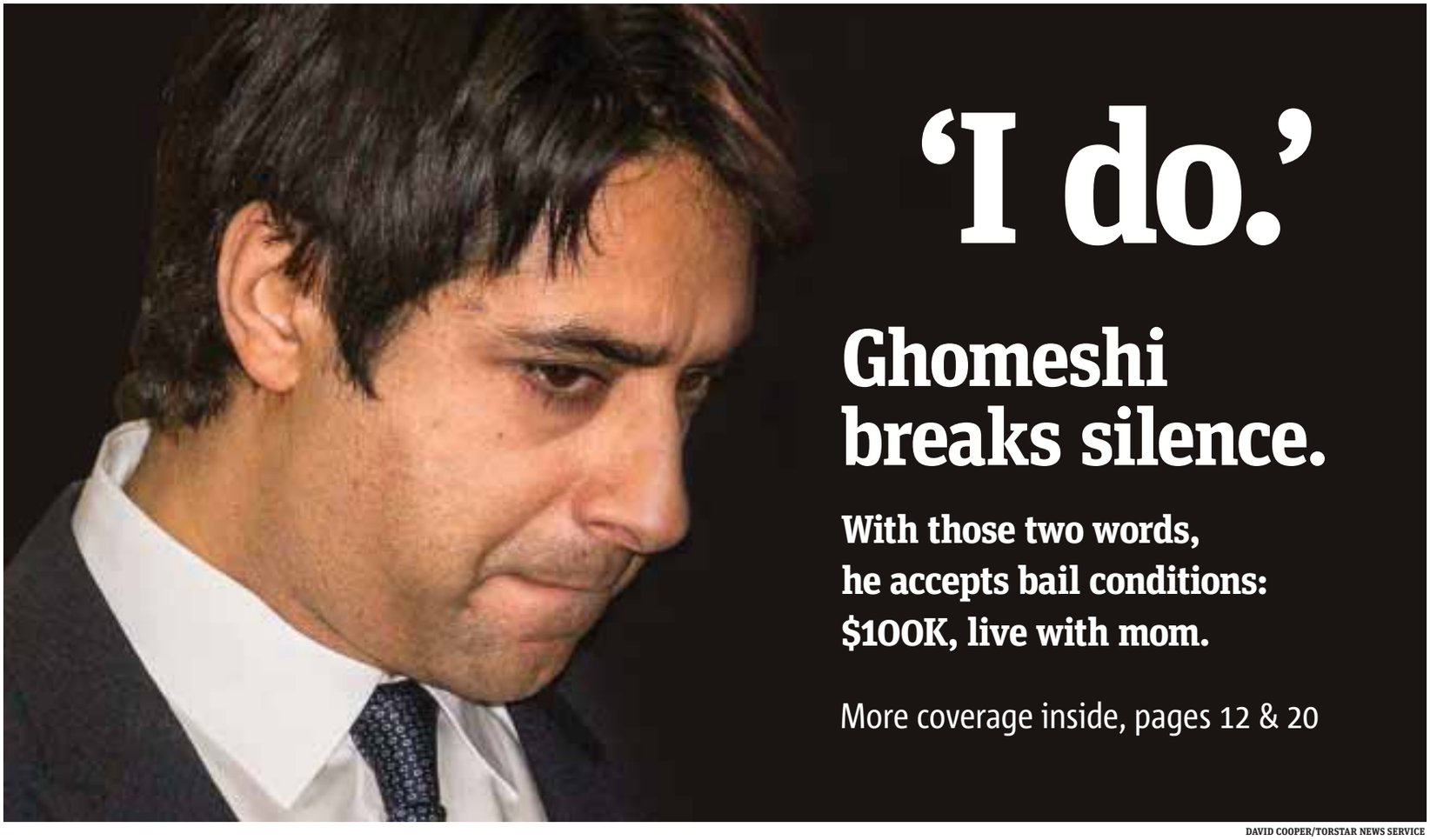
'Eye-opener' of a survey

Canadians actually enjoy their commute and find it relaxing: Study PAGE 9

Into the Wild revisted

Sister of Chris McCandless speaks out about their upbringing PAGE 22



'I do.'

Ghomeshi breaks silence.

With those two words, he accepts bail conditions: $100K, live with mom.

More coverage inside, pages 12 & 20

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NEWS 1

Federal funding

Province to replace front-line band constables

Manitoba says it will fill a void left by the end of a federal band constables program by replacing front-line peace officers on dozens of reserves with better-trained safety officers.

Federal funding for the band constable program runs out in March and Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney has rejected any extension.

Manitoba's governing NDP has criticized the decision as a "line of attack" on First Nations communities and on Wednesday introduced a bill to fund safety officers with an expanded mandate.

Attorney General James Allum said Ottawa is pulling out of the program but is leaving $1.4 million on the table. Manitoba has already dismissed the cash as insufficient and has decided to match that money and use it to pay the salaries of safety officers whose skills are tailored to the needs of individual First Nations communities.

"In unilaterally terminating that program, (the federal government) all but abandoned First Nation communities," Allum said. "We're stepping into that breach."

Some 31 Manitoba First Nations communities rely on band constables and currently get about $1.7 million in federal funding for the program. Supporters say the constables are a vital front-line service for many remote reserves where the RCMP detachment is several communities away.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fire destroys home, damages two in St. Norbert

Crews from 13 different city fire halls were needed to put out a fire that completely destroyed one home and damaged two others in St. Norbert early Wednesday. Firefighters were called to the blaze at 78 Payment St. shortly before 5 a.m. The fire spread to a neighbouring home and left a third damaged by radiant heat. No one was injured and the cause is under investigation. SHANE GIBSON/METRO

Accountability motion for city job stirs debate

Horrible bosses?
Making performance reviews public is bad practice say HR experts

COLIN FAST
winnipeg@metronews.ca

A city councillor's attempt to improve accountability for Winnipeg's next chief administrative officer might scare some candidates away from applying for the job, according to local executive recruiters.

A motion from Coun. Matt Allard will be debated at Friday's EPC meeting. It calls for annual performance reviews of the CAO "to be released to council and the public."

"I've been recruiting senior executives for 25 years and I've never seen a performance evaluation be made public," said Karen Swystun, CEO of Waterford Global. "Someone's career could easily be affected in a negative way if that information is misinterpreted."

She said it's common to share reviews with board members, but people not involved in setting goals or having conversations with executives aren't in a position to assess job performance.

"I think that could have a dampening affect on people's candidacy if it's not clear what's being published," warned Keith Sinclair, CEO of Harris Consulting.

He added that it would be reasonable to share performance targets with the public, but making the whole review public might cause some participants — including councillors or other senior administrators — to hold back on any criticism of the CAO's performance.

Allard explained he brought forward the motion after hearing concerns about CAO performance during the recent election campaign.

"I find it surprising we don't have a regular review process at the city, and I'd like to think anyone who is considering the job would be happy to have an evaluation made public," he said.

"I think this is a good mechanism to improve transparency."

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River warming huts are hotter than ever, contest winners show

Winners unveiled. Pool of 100 entries in this year's contest push the artistic envelope, Forks staff report

BERNICE PONTANILLA
bernice.pontanilla@metronews.ca

Winnipeg's love affair with river warming huts is garnering more attention in architectural circles all over the world and increasing the quality of contest submissions, said the head of The Forks Renewal Corporation.

Paul Jordan, the corporation's CEO, along with other Forks staff unveiled the winners of the Warming Huts v.2015 on Wednesday, chosen from a pool of 100 entries.

"We've always received great designs, but this year they really push the artistic envelope," said Jordan, adding that huts from previous years are now going on tour to places such as Calgary and Boston.

This year's winners include an art installation called "This Big" inspired by an ice-fishing journey, a shelter called "The Hole Idea" that is based on the Acme cartoon's portable hole and "Recycling Words," which uses 50 recycled chairs and pairs of skis.

Four more huts round out 2015's edition, with one coming from Mexico, another by University of Manitoba faculty of architecture students and a third by students from Kelvin High School.

Joe Kalturnyk, co-founder of RAW:almond, the pop-up restaurant on the frozen Assiniboine River, says he's looking forward to seeing the winning design for the restaurant take shape. BERNICE PONTANILLA/ METRO

The seventh hut is the result of a new design competition for RAW:almond's river restaurant.

Joe Kalturnyk, co-founder of RAW:almond, said their winning design, which comes from England, includes three different rooms and a long outdoor deck.

"It's going to be open to the public for anyone to use. It's extending our programming more into the skating area," said Kalturnyk, adding their main concern for the frame structure with interior "skin" — or tarps — will be the wind.

Kalturnyk said they're working with structural engineers and is confident it will be an amazing experience for those who visit.

This Big is an art installation inspired by ice fishing. CONTRIBUTED

The Hole Idea is based on the portable holes used in cartoons. CONTRIBUTED

Recycled Words features 50 recycled chairs and pairs of skis. CONTRIBUTED

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White Cowbell Oklahoma is 'your salvation'

Most obnoxious band? Band set out to 'raise the loathing and hatred' of music critics

JARED STORY
winnipeg@metronews.ca

White Cowbell Oklahoma "started out of spite," according to its frontman, Clem Clemsen.

Formed 15 years ago in Toronto, the southern rock sextet originally boasted 17 members, including nine guitarists and three drummers, with the intention of being the most obnoxious band in T.O.

"Southern rock bands tend to have three guitar players and two drummers and things like that, so we wanted to be exponentially more obnoxious, just raise the loathing and hatred of all the music critics and the music industry," Clemsen said.

"We thought we'd have a couple of shows and that would be it, but it just spiralled out of control," he explained. "Here we are 15 years later and all those naysayers are probably working at Starbucks now, and all those record labels don't even exist anymore. They just hated the fact that we existed without their help."

White Cowbell Oklahoma has endured on the strength of a ballsy boogie-woogie beat and a healthy appetite for destruction.

Details

White Cowbell Oklahoma plays the Pyramid Cabaret on Friday.

- Opening the show is self-described "southern gothic death cult" Big John Bates and Dutch band Paceshifters.
- Tickets are $15 at Into the Music, Soul Survivors and Ticketmaster (plus fees). Showtime is 9 p.m.

Rock 'n' roll juggernaut White Cowbell Oklahoma invades Winnipeg on Friday. CONTRIBUTED

The band is known for its liquor-fuelled stage antics, which can include chainsawing stuffed animals, TPing the audience and occasional nudity.

White Cowbell Oklahoma is working on a new album, but in the meantime it's released a double vinyl version of 2012's Buenas Nachas.

The expanded album is only available at shows and at whitecowbell.com.

"Your salvation from the shackles that bind you depends on you bowing down to the White Cowbell Oklahoma rock 'n' roll juggernaut," Clemsen said.

"Only then will you know true salvation. And shame. We like to call it shamevation."

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Corydon-Osborne plan past first hurdle

Restart. After years in limbo, amended version gets OK from city committee

BERNICE PONTANILLA
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After years of starts and stops, an area plan for Corydon Avenue and Osborne Village is finally complete and cleared its first hurdle.

An amended version of the Corydon-Osborne plan, which covers a 270-acre area bordered by Stafford Street to the west, Fleet Avenue to the south, Donald Street to the east, and Gertrude and Grosvenor avenues to the north, got the backing of the property and development committee on Tuesday.

The city centre community committee first endorsed the idea of an area plan back in 2005.

A decision to terminate the plan in July of 2012 caused an outcry from citizens and ward Coun. Jenny Gerbasi, with Mayor Sam Katz stepping in to restart the consultation process.

A swath of land

270

The area in the plan for Corydon Avenue and Osborne Village includes a massive 270 acres east of Stafford Street, north of Fleet Avenue, west of Donald Street, and south of Gertrude and Grosvenor avenues.

Coun. Jenny Gerbasi METRO FILE

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The Allman Block on Main Street, designed by the great architect J.H.G. Russell, still has its original ornamental tin ceiling and circa 1904 doors.
BERNICE PONTANILLA/METRO

From 1904. Allman Block up for heritage designation

A showpiece of 20th century architecture on Main Street is being considered as an addition to a heritage protection list.

The petition from the owners of Allman Block at 594 Main St. to add it to the historical resources list is the first of an expected flood of requests to come forward since the adoption of a new bylaw last June, said Cindy Tugwell, executive director of Heritage Winnipeg.

A city report on the agenda of Thursday's downtown development committee states that Allman Block, built in 1904 for clothier Daniel F. Allman and designed by prolific architect J.H.G. Russell, has "outstanding architectural and historical significance."

Tugwell said the city should preserve its pre-First World War buildings, such as Allman Block and, if possible, entire streetscapes that showcase this type of architecture.

"These heritage buildings, in many cases, the kind of architecture that they carry in the downtown is unique to a period in Winnipeg's history when we had the best of the best," she said.

"We were a fast-growing city, and that kind of architecture, in many cases, can never be replicated again, so once you lose it, you lose it for good."

Also under consideration for the committee is the addition of several fire halls to the commemorative list under the Historical Resources Bylaw.

BERNICE PONTANILLA/METRO

He's prepared. MP wears body camera to guard against 'besmirchment'

A Conservative MP issued a bizarre press release Wednesday claiming he uses a body-worn camera to guard against sexual misconduct allegations.

Peter Goldring, MP for Edmonton-East, suggested such cameras can help elected officials "prevent besmirchment when encounters run awry."

"It will not be good enough to simply say that your intentions were honourable and you were just inviting a colleague to your apartment at two in the morning to play a game of Scrabble," Goldring said.

Peter Goldring
THE CANADIAN PRESS

"MPs must learn, as I have... that all do not tell the truth. I now wear 'protection' in the form of body-worn video recording equipment. I suggest others do so too."

Calls made to Goldring's office were not returned by press time. LUKE SIMCOE/METRO

Ukraine

Canada donating cold-weather gear to Ukrainian army

Canada will send the Ukrainian army more than $22 million worth of cold-weather gear, including jackets and boots, Defence Minister Rob Nicholson said Wednesday.

The donations come from surplus military stocks. The green clothing dates from the late 1990s, a Defence official said. The Department of Foreign Affairs will follow up with an additional $5 million in non-lethal aid in the new year, including a field hospital, tactical radios, night vision goggles and bomb-disposal equipment, Nicholson said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadians actually like their commute: Study

Commuters travel on the busy Gardiner Expressway looking east toward downtown Toronto on Sept. 16. DAVID COOPER/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Time to relax, reflect.
Many people say commuting improves their mood: Report

Canadians enjoy their commute and find it relaxing. That's the conclusion of a study released by Toronto ad agency Bensimon Byrne — a finding that contradicts the popular vision of commuters as harried and fed up, if not enraged.

"Even more surprisingly, three-quarters of commuters report being in a better mood after their commute," according to the survey conducted for Bensimon Byrne by the Gandalf Group.

Quoted

"The results are an eye-opener."

Max Valiquette, Bensimon Byrne

"The results are an eye-opener and contradict the prevailing narrative of commuting, which is often conveyed as long and negatively affecting our work-life balance," said Max Valiquette, managing director of strategy, Bensimon Byrne.

"In fact, our findings show that having some time to relax and rest, or a few quiet moments to reflect is what makes commuting so important and desirable."

The online survey questioned 1,500 people in various regions of Canada, with an oversampling of commuters in the Greater Toronto Area.

GTA commuters were less likely to be in a better mood after a commute (72 per cent) relative to the national average of 77 per cent, the survey found.

And 16 per cent of respondents in the GTA dreaded their commute, versus the national average of 11 per cent.

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Fear of genetic discrimination swaying patients from testing

When reporter Jessica Smith Cross learned a Silicon Valley genetics testing service, 23andme, is now offering Canadians a $199 mail-in test, she was curious: How much could she learn from her DNA and how much should she learn? Today, Smith Cross looks into genetic discrimination and finds it's very real in Canada.

It's all in your genes

- This is the second in a three-part series in which reporter Jessica Smith Cross — who took 23andme's new mail-in genetic spit test — delves into the implications of increasingly easy testing in the complicated legal and ethical Canadian landscape.
- Tomorrow: Smith Cross on her results and whether or not to learn if she is predisposed to Alzheimer's.
- Read the whole package at metronews.ca

JESSICA SMITH CROSS
jessica.smithcross@metronews.ca

Dr. Ronald Cohn has a problem: His 12-year-old patient has one of two genetic diseases. One is treatable with medication, while the other requires constant monitoring and possible surgery to prevent sudden, early death. The question is: Which one does she have?

She and her father show symptoms — including extremely bendable joints and an enlarged heart vessel — consistent with the more easily treatable condition (Marfan syndrome), but also consistent with Loeys-Dietz, the potentially-fatal disease.

Dr. Cohn has recommended the girl — or her father — undergo a painless genetic test, easily done using saliva. As both diseases are inherited, if the father has the genetic mutation causing Loeys-Dietz, the daughter would likely have it, too.

But her parents refused to consent to the test, fearing it would open the father and daughter to genetic discrimination.

"The father was very quick to understand, 'Well, if I do this and I don't have life insurance and long-term disability insurance at the moment, I won't be able to get it if I have the disease,'" Cohn, the co-director of the Centre for Genetic Medicine at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, told me.

Cohn said he has been treating the girl under the assumption she has Loeys-Dietz. The child comes to the hospital regularly for ultrasounds of her heart and management of a disease she may not have.

"She may not have to live with this," he said. "(If the test came out negative) the family wouldn't have to live with the anxiety that she has a very aggressive form of a heart disease."

Cohn is one of the proponents of the proposed Genetic Non-Discrimination Act to prevent genetic discrimination (for example, in employment or insurance coverage). The bill is currently before the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights.

Cohn testified before the committee last month that fear of genetic discrimination has stopped many of his patients' parents from allowing genetic testing that could help their children and prevent unnecessary procedures.

Chiropractor Brynne Stainsby, seen in her Markham, Ont., office studio, faced genetic discrimination when she applied for insurance. TARIN ELBERT/METRO

Genetic discrimination is real

Brynne Stainsby has experienced first-hand how genetic discrimination can change a life.

Stainsby knew she had a 50-50 chance of having the gene that causes Huntington's disease, a neurodegenerative disorder.

As a student, she wanted to get tested but feared that should she find she had the gene, she would be denied insurance coverage — needed by law for her chosen profession of chiropractor.

But when Stainsby looked into disability and life insurance she was shocked to learn that she would be rejected by Canada's big insurers, unless she confirmed she did not have the gene.

"I was furious," she said. "You can't be discriminated against based on your gender, you can't be discriminated against based on your race. But it's reasonable you can be discriminated against based on your genes? Something you have literally no control over?"

Her father has the gene that causes Huntington's disease, but to this day exhibits no symptoms. Each case is different, depending on the gene's mutation. Since her father worked his entire career and retired healthy, it's likely she would, too, if found to have the gene.

She was able to get a policy with small coverage through an independent insurer — as she only had to tell them that she had no knowledge of personal health issues. They did not ask about family genetic history.

After getting the policy, she felt confident getting tested and found she does not carry the gene. She was then able to get a larger policy.

The insurance industry's stance

The insurance industry generally opposes the Genetic Non-Discrimination Act. Frank Zinatelli, vice-president and counsel for the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association, said the industry has real concerns about the bill.

The industry fears people will take a genetic test, learn their life expectancy is short and then take out a policy and withhold that information, Zinatelli said. If this becomes a trend, the industry would have to raise insurance premiums across the board.

However, Canada's privacy commissioner's office disagrees. It commissioned research that found that a ban on the use of genetic test results by the life and health insurance industry would not have a significant impact on insurers or insurance markets. Similar legislation — the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) — is currently in place in the U.S.

However, Zinatelli argues that while genetic information is only used to a small degree today by both the industry and consumers, the industry expects it to be used more so in the future.

On the benefits of genetic testing

"She (a 12-year-old patient) may not have to live with this ... the family wouldn't have to live with the anxiety that she has a very aggressive form of a heart disease."

Dr. Ronald Cohn, co-director of the Centre for Genetic Medicine at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto

Senator's bill

- A spokesperson for Minister of Justice Peter McKay said the government will continue to review Sen. James Cowan's bill to ban genetic discrimination.
- He will also encourage the provinces to take steps to protect Canadians from genetic discrimination, as most workplaces fall under provincial labour law.

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Military. Man charged with wearing beret and medals

A 44-year-old man has been charged after police allege he wore military items and marched with veterans at three different Remembrance Day ceremonies in southern Ontario.

Police say a man was approached by an active member of the Canadian military on Nov. 9 at a Remembrance Day ceremony in Clarington, east of Oshawa.

It's alleged the suspect was wearing a red beret and military-issued medals and was seen marching with veterans and participating in the laying of wreaths.

Police say the active military member questioned the man about his past service and became suspicious as the medals were not consistent with the time served.

Investigators say the same suspect was also seen taking part in a Nov. 8 ceremony in the area and a Nov. 11 ceremony in nearby Bowmanville.

Eric Janssens of Clarington, Ont., is charged with unlawfully wearing a military uniform. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Franck Gervais

A similar incident at Remembrance Day ceremonies in Ottawa resulted in charges against a 32-year-old Quebec man earlier this month.

- Franck Gervais of Cantley, Que., faces charges including personating a public officer, unlawful use of a military uniform and unlawful use of military decorations. He's due in court Dec. 9.

Inquest. Witnesses recall scene at seniors' home

Witnesses to the seniors' home fire that killed 32 people in Quebec last January have described a horror-filled night with residents begging to be saved as flames engulfed them.

Conrad Morin was living on the top floor of the Residence du Havre in L'Isle-Verte when the blaze erupted just after midnight last Jan. 23.

In gripping testimony Wednesday at a coroner's inquest into the fire, the 89-year-old Morin said his first instinct was to save his wife, Eva, who lived on a lower floor because she had limited movement.

But as he rushed into the corridor he was forced back because of thick smoke, while his wife would die in the tragedy.

"I could hear women shouting, 'Come get us, come get us'," he told coroner Cyrille Delage, who is overseeing the inquest at the courthouse in Riviere-du-Loup. The former firefighter was able to get out via a door two floors above the ground after ripping off plastic weatherstripping.

The inquest also saw a video filmed by Nathalie Paquin Tanguay, who was travelling in the area with her family as the fire raged.

One of Paquin Tanguay's brothers, Pascal Paquin, said that by the time he saw the first firefighter, "it was already too late." Paquin testified he had the impression he had been at the scene "for an eternity" by the time they arrived. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Broader access to come

N.B. to change abortion rules

The New Brunswick government is scrapping a section of a regulation that restricted access to abortion and set the province apart for its unique policies on the procedure.

Premier Brian Gallant said Wednesday that the planned amendments mean women will no longer have to get the approval of two doctors before having an abortion. The procedure will also no longer have to be done by a specialist. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Crown psychiatrist

Magnotta knew right from wrong: Psychiatrist

A psychiatrist hired by the Crown cast doubt Wednesday on Luka Rocco Magnotta's defence that he was not criminally responsible the night he killed Jun Lin. Magnotta was aware of his actions when he killed and dismembered Lin in May 2012, Dr. Gilles Chamberland testified. Chamberland said there was enough in various reports to show the accused knew what he was doing. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jian Ghomeshi makes his way through a mob of media with his lawyer Marie Henein (right) at a Toronto court on Wednesday. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jian Ghomeshi faces sex assault, choking charges

$100K bail. Former radio host is charged with four counts of sexual assault and one count of overcoming resistance by choking

A sombre Jian Ghomeshi stood silently by his lawyer on Wednesday as she told a large crowd of reporters at a Toronto courthouse that the former CBC Radio host would plead not guilty to multiple counts of sexual assault.

The charges — four counts of sexual assault and one count of overcoming resistance by choking — capped weeks of mounting allegations against the once-popular media personality who could now face up to life in prison if convicted.

"We will address these allegations fully and directly in a courtroom," lawyer Marie Henein said just moments after the 47-year-old former host of the radio program Q was released on $100,000 bail.

In the packed courtroom, Ghomeshi looked tired as he sat in the prisoner's box wearing a dark suit with a light shirt open at the collar. He later donned a tie after he was granted bail.

His bail conditions include living with his mother — who was present in court and acted as his surety — no contact with his alleged victims and an agreement to surrender his passport and remain in Ontario.

When asked by a judge if he understood the conditions of his release, Ghomeshi clasped his hands in front of him, nodded slightly and said "yes" and "I do."

Ghomeshi was fired by the CBC after the broadcaster said it had seen "graphic evidence" that he had physically injured a woman. Since then, nine women have come forward with allegations that Ghomeshi sexually or physically assaulted them.

Three of the women filed police complaints — which led to the charges laid Wednesday.

Ontario's premier said that any development that helped victims feel comfortable coming forward was welcome.

"If we can, as a society, make it easier for people to talk about those experiences and then move to action, then I think that's a very good thing," said Kathleen Wynne.

Ghomeshi has admitted in a lengthy Facebook post published on the day he was fired that he engaged in "rough sex," but insisted his encounters with women were consensual.

His next court appearance is on Jan. 8. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Winnipeg Police

Sex assault reports not rising: Police

Winnipeg police say the spotlight put on sexual violence by the unfolding Jian Ghomeshi case has not led to an uptick of reports of sexual assaults in this city.

"In relation to that CBC matter, no, I'm not aware of any increases at this point or anybody coming forward as a result of that," said police spokesperson Const. Jason Michalyshen Wednesday. METRO

Tories still say Raynolds made contentious remarks

A Conservative cloak-and-dagger caper aimed at capturing a Liberal candidate in a verbal gaffe has taken another twist, with the governing party producing expert audio analysis to back up its version of who said what.

The Conservative party asked Edward J. Primeau, an audio forensic expert with 30 years' experience, to analyze audio of a secretly recorded conversation involving Marlo Raynolds, the Liberal candidate in Banff-Airdrie.

In a report to the party, given to The Canadian Press, Primeau concludes that it was indeed Raynolds who said the Tory income-splitting plan would give couples with children money that they'd waste on television sets and cars, rather than caring for their kids.

Raynolds was flabbergasted Wednesday to learn the Conservatives are refusing to back down, even though another individual involved in the conversation, Tam McTavish, has said he's the one who uttered the offending remarks. Sun Media has retracted the story on which the Tories based their attacks.

McTavish said he'd be happy to provide the expert with another audio sample of his voice.

The audio — surreptitiously recorded by a woman identified as a Conservative operative who has conducted previous sting operations against Liberals — was given to Sun Media personality Brian Lilley. He attributed the remarks to Raynolds in a column and on his television show last week.

Sun Media issued a retraction Tuesday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Bob McCulloch. Prosecutor faces renewed criticism

He criticized the media. He talked about witness testimony that didn't match physical evidence. And he did it at night, as a city already on edge waited to learn if a grand jury would indict a white Ferguson police officer in the shooting death of an unarmed black 18-year-old.

St. Louis County Prosecutor Bob McCulloch — whose impartiality has been questioned since soon after Michael Brown was killed by Officer Darren Wilson on Aug. 9 — has come under renewed scrutiny since he appeared before television cameras to announce that the grand jury would not indict Wilson. A defensive McCulloch repeatedly cited what he said were inconsistencies and erroneous witness accounts. He never mentioned that Brown was unarmed.

St. Louis County Prosecutor Bob McCulloch. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Attorneys for Brown's family and activists said Tuesday that everything from how evidence was presented to the grand jury to the way McCulloch delivered the news of its decision bolstered their belief that the outcome was predetermined by McCulloch, who has deep family roots and relationships with police.

"This grand jury decision, we feel, is a reflection of the sentiment of those that presented the evidence," Anthony Gray, an attorney for Brown's family, said at a news conference.

Activists and Brown family attorneys had asked McCulloch — whose father, a police officer, was killed while responding to a call involving a black suspect — to appoint a special prosecutor. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ferguson begins cleanup after 2 nights of unrest

A protester is arrested outside of St. Louis City Hall on Wednesday. CHARLIE RIEDEL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hopes for continued calm. Wilson breaks long public silence

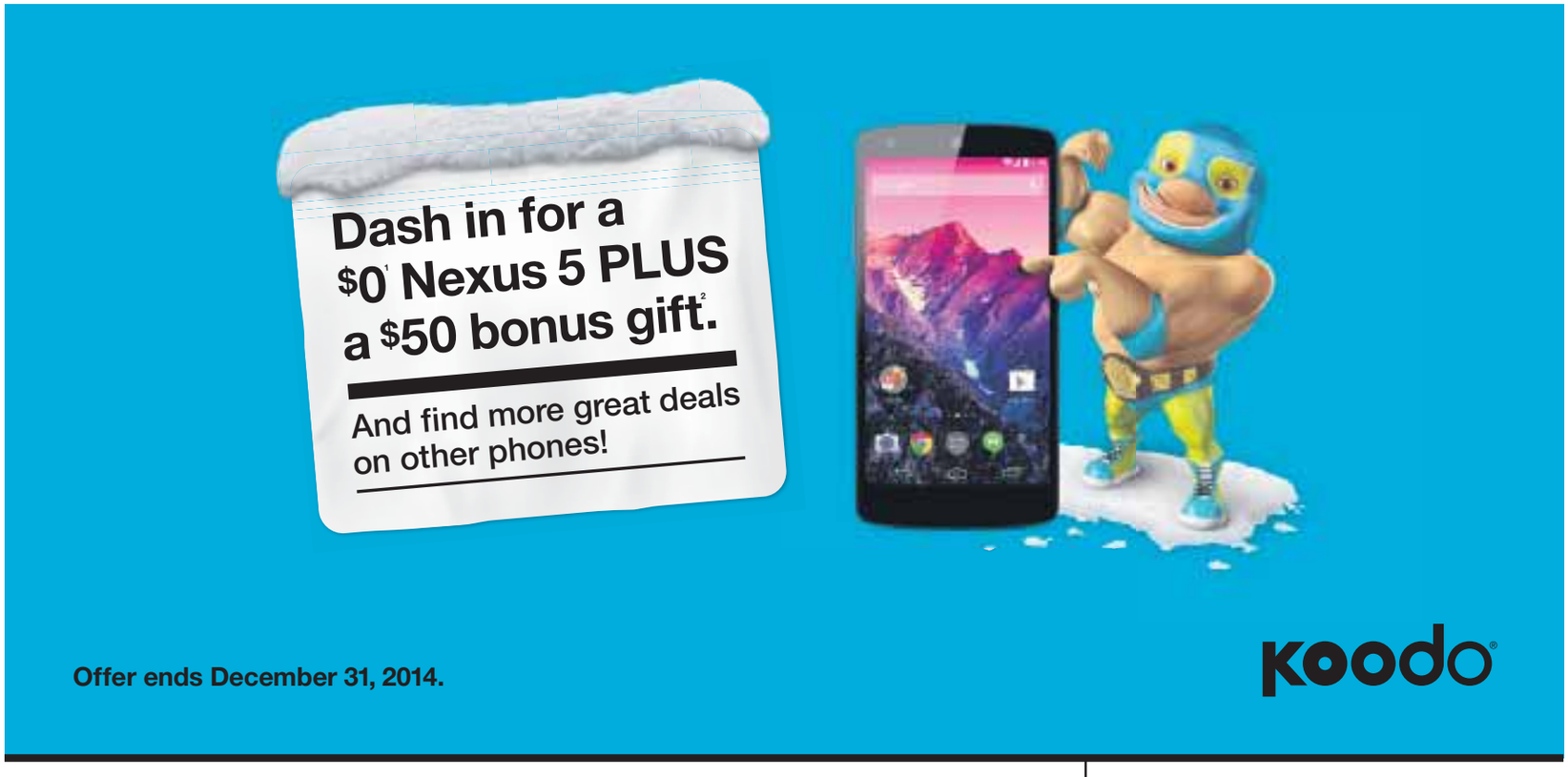
Business owners and residents boarded up windows and cleared away debris Wednesday as Ferguson sought a tentative return to normal after two nights of unrest over a grand jury decision's not to indict a police officer in the shooting death of an unarmed black 18-year-old.

Protesters continued to hold scattered demonstrations, including a group that rushed into city hall in St. Louis, the city neighbouring Ferguson, screaming "Shame, shame." Police locked down the building and called in more than a hundred extra officers. Three people were arrested.

About 200 demonstrators marched through downtown St. Louis and held a mock trial of Darren Wilson, the white police officer who shot and killed Michael Brown during an Aug. 9 struggle.

The racially charged case has stoked passions nationwide, triggering debates over the relationship between black communities and law enforcement. Since the grand jury's decision was announced Monday night, protesters in cities throughout the country have rallied behind the refrain "hands up, don't shoot," and drawn attention to other police killings.

As the tension in Ferguson eased somewhat, Wilson broke his long public silence, insisting on national television that he could not have done anything differently in the Aug. 9 confrontation. The officer testified during the grand jury hearings that he felt threatened and that Brown tried to grab his gun, something the Brown family has said they don't believe. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS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Russian tiger hits up Chinese farm

Ustin. The Siberian tiger, released into the wild by Putin, has killed 15 goats and left another three missing

A rare Siberian tiger released into the wild by Russian President Vladimir Putin is keeping farmers in north-eastern China on edge.

China's official Xinhua News Agency said Wednesday that the animal, named Ustin, bit and killed 15 goats and left another three missing on Sunday and Monday on a farm in Heilongjiang province's Fuyuan county.

Xinhua said the farm's owner, Guo Yulin, was stressed about the tiger, but that he would be compensated by the local forestry department for the loss of the 18 goats.

Quoted

"When I opened the goat house in the morning, dead goats were everywhere."

Guo Yulin, Chinese farmer whose farm was attacked by a tiger

According to Xinhua, Russian experts rescued five tiger cubs two years ago. Ustin was one of three released by Putin in May in a remote part of the Amur region, which straddles the border between far-eastern Russia and north-eastern China.

Two of the tigers entered China. They were fitted with tracking devices and are monitored by Chinese wildlife protection workers.

The other tiger to enter China, Kuzya, was believed to have raided a farm and eaten five chickens last month in another Heilongjiang county.

Guo told Xinhua that he was alerted by dog barks on Sunday night, but that his check turned up nothing unusual. He said he woke up the next morning to find two goats dead and three others missing.

Xinhua said the goats' skulls were crushed by the tiger and that a hole the size of a human finger was visible on each goat's head.

The farmer said the tiger returned the following night but made no noise at all.

"When I opened the goat house in the morning, dead goats were everywhere," Guo said, according to Xinhua.

Local experts found the tiger's footprints around the goat house and on its roof, Xinhua reported. Guo was asked to either relocate his goats or reinforce his farm, it said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A white cub? Is that true or are you lion?

In this photo provided on Wednesday by the Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium, a white male cub nurses at the Omaha, Neb., zoo. Zoo officials say the cub is one of three — two boys and one girl — born late last week to Ahadi, one of the zoo's lionesses. HENRY DOORLY ZOO AND AQUARIUM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Shakespeare first folio discovered by accident

The accidental discovery in a small library in northern France of an original first folio of Shakespeare's plays has sent a jolt of excitement around the world of Shakespeare scholars.

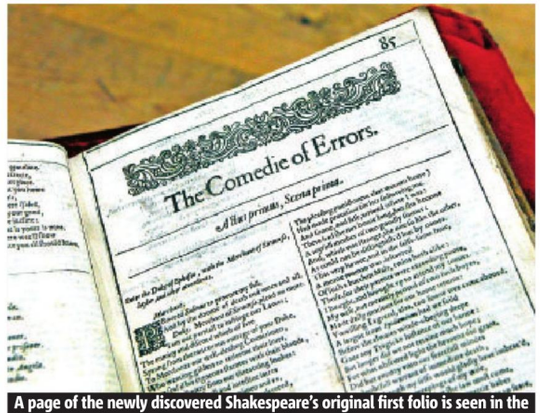
The find brings the total of known folios in the world to 233, and is significant, as each first folio can contain variations that shed light on the bard's intentions.

Among the 900 pages of the most recent discovery are rare annotations that suggest it was used for performance.

The annotations "might tell us something about Shakespeare's reception at the time, how they were thought of as text for performance," said Stanley Wells, honorary president of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

Scholars have not yet had a chance to carry out the painstaking comparisons with the texts of other folios to determine what variations the latest discovery may contain.

Remy Cordonnier, the director of the Saint-Omer library's medieval and early modern collection, happened upon the folio among the belongings of a Jesuit evangelist that were bequeathed from a now-defunct Jesuit college in the town.



A page of the newly discovered Shakespeare's original first folio is seen in the Saint-Omer library, in France on Wednesday. MICHEL SPINGLER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"I first tried to keep a level head as I wasn't sure 100 per cent of its authenticity," Cordonnier said.

Missing were 12 title pages, which record the printing date and location. So Cordonnier sought the help of Eric Rasmussen, a Nevada-based specialist in Shakespeare first folios, who travelled to the small town near Calais to examine it.

Rasmussen concluded that it was among about 750 Shakespeare first folios printed in 1623, seven years after the playwright died.

The first folios are the first complete printed collections of Shakespeare's plays. Sixteen Shakespeare plays, including The Tempest and Macbeth, were not printed in the bard's lifetime — meaning the first folio saved them from oblivion. One first folio in 2006 sold at Christie's for $6.8 million.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hope. Ebola in Sierra Leone may have peaked

The Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone, which has been surging in recent days, may have reached its peak and could be on the verge of slowing down, Sierra Leone's information minister said Wednesday.

But in a reminder of how serious the situation is in Sierra Leone, the World Health Organization said the country accounted for more than half of the new cases in the hardest-hit countries in the past week. By contrast, infections appear to be either stabilizing or declining in Guinea and Liberia, where vigorous campaigning for a Senate election this week suggests the disease might be loosening its grip.

In all, 15,935 people have been sickened with Ebola in West Africa and other places it has occasionally popped up. Of those, 5,689 have died.

Alpha Kanu, Sierra Leone's minister of information, told journalists that with the imminent completion of two British-built treatment centres, the worst could be over.

"We believe that now that those treatment centres are ready, the transmission of new cases will start reducing," he said. "I don't think we can get any higher than we are now — we are at the plateau of the curve ... we will have a downward trend, once we have somewhere to take people," said Kanu. In Liberia, a sign of that country's recovery came when a candidate expressed delight at how many supporters turned out for a campaign rally for elections. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

'Far behind'

Sierra Leone has nearly 6,600 of the reported Ebola cases, with about 1,400 deaths, and the infections are increasing swiftly.

- The World Health Organization said Wednesday both Sierra Leone and Liberia appeared to be far behind the UN goal of isolating 70 per cent of patients by Dec. 1, with only 20 per cent isolated.

Iranian Jews find acceptance

In this photo collage, Iranian Jews each pose holding a painting of Moses with the Ten Commandments, after prayers at the Molla Agha Baba Synagogue, in the city of Yazd, 676 kilometres south of Tehran, Iran, a home for Jews for more than 3,000 years. It has the Middle East's largest Jewish population outside of Israel, a perennial foe of the country. But while Iran's Jews in recent years had their faith continually criticized by the country's previous government, they've found new acceptance from moderate President Hassan Rouhani.

EBRAHIM NOROOZI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nigeria

Boko Haram suspected of killing villagers

Suspected Boko Haram gunmen killed at least 20 people in an attack Monday on two villages on the outskirts of Chibok, the town where more than 200 schoolgirls were abducted in April, said a Nigerian official.

Attackers struck Kamtahi and Galtimari villages, burning houses and forcing residents to flee, said Muhammed Abbas Gava. "Virtually every house in the two villages was burnt to ash," said Gava.

"The villages were totally razed down as residents fled for their lives" some even while injured, he added. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Syria

Airstrikes on Islamic stronghold kill at least 95

The death toll from a series of Syrian government airstrikes on the Islamic State group's stronghold in northeastern Syria has risen to at least 95, making it one of the deadliest attacks on the city of Raqqa in the past three years, activists said Wednesday.

Some of the Tuesday airstrikes hit a popular market near a museum, causing many civilian casualties. At least 120 others were wounded according to the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The Associated Press could not independently confirm the death toll. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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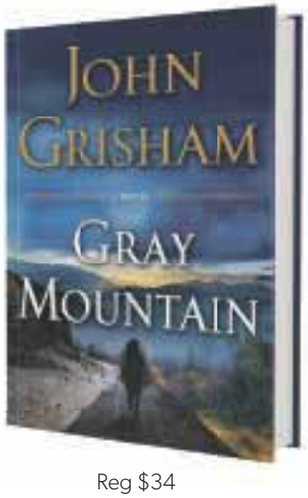

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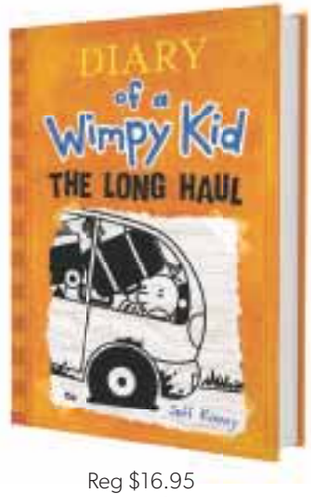

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Overhaul our tax system, report says

C.D. Howe Institute. A revamp of Canada's system would create fairness, argues paper's author

A new research paper for the C.D. Howe Institute says Canada can help combat rising income inequality by taxing people separately for their paycheque and investment income.

The paper's author says applying a flat rate on investment income would create fairness by closing legal, taxation-avoiding tactics — mostly used by higher-income earners.

Kevin Milligan of the University of British Columbia also recommends adding a tax bracket for annual incomes of $250,000 and perhaps another one at $400,000.

Milligan says the changes could open the door to other reforms on consumption taxes, environmental taxes and corporate taxes — which could help promote economic growth.

He says Canada's income-inequality gap has widened considerably over the past 30 years, even though it hasn't kept pace with the divide in the United States.

Rich get richer

150%

The paper's author says over the past 30 years Canadians in the top 0.01 per cent of earners have seen their incomes rise by 150 per cent, while those in the bottom 90 per cent have only seen eight per cent growth.

Still, he says over that period Canadians in the top 0.01 per cent of earners have seen their incomes rise by 150 per cent, while those in the bottom 90 per cent have only seen eight per cent growth.

Canada's tax system, Milligan added, was developed in the 1960s and no longer fits today's economic reality.

"What's interesting is our tax system hasn't responded at all to that very large change in the distribution of income," said Milligan, also a fellow-in-residence for the C.D. Howe think-tank, in an interview. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"We need to look seriously at a number of tax reforms that would improve the efficiency of our economy and provide a better environment for investment to provide the jobs for the future."

Kevin Milligan, a fellow-in-residence for the C.D. Howe think-tank, in an interview

Thanksgiving in England

Danny Lidgate displays a turkey at his butcher shop in Holland Park in London on Tuesday. Plump turkeys in butcher-shop windows. Harvest displays of pumpkin and corn. Sandwich boards describing groaning feasts. Thanksgiving isn't a holiday in Britain, but you might be forgiven for being fooled. It's not hard to find someone to talk turkey, never mind sell you one. That's because there are so many Americans in Britain these days that dozens of businesses have started selling the goods they need to celebrate.
KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CRTC

Internet market doesn't need more regulation: Bell

Canada's Internet market is already highly competitive and should not be regulated further, says one of the country's largest players.

Bell Canada is telling the telecom regulator its investment in so-called fibre-to-home technology would slow or stop should it be forced to offer smaller competitors greater access to its networks.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Had forecast a loss

Canada Post on track for profit

Despite more people still choosing email over snail mail, the Canada Post Group of Companies says it's on track to earn a profit this year, defying an earlier forecast for a multimillion-dollar loss.

The Crown corporation said it earned $84 million before tax for the first three quarters of the year, driven by its parcels business and higher stamp prices.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

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Dow Jones: 17,827.75 (+12.81)

Firearm checks piling up

More gun sales than ever are slipping through the federal background-check system in the U.S. — 186,000 last year, a rate of 512 gun sales a day, as states fail to consistently provide thorough, real-time updates on criminal and mental histories to the FBI.

At no time of year is this problem more urgent. This Friday opens the busiest season for gun purchases, when requests for background checks speed up to nearly two a second, testing the limits of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, or NICS.

The stakes are high: In the U.S., there are already nine guns for every 10 people, and someone is killed with a firearm every 16 minutes. Mass shootings are happening every few weeks.

"We have a perfect storm coming," FBI manager Kimberly Del Greco told The Associated Press during a rare glimpse into the inner workings of the system.

Much of the responsibility for preventing criminals and the mentally ill from buying guns is shouldered by about 500 men and women who run the system from inside the FBI's criminal-justice centre, a grey office building with concrete walls and mirrored windows just outside Bridgeport, West Va.

By federal law, NICS researchers must race against the clock: They have until the end of the third business day following an attempted firearm purchase to determine whether or not a buyer is eligible. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ad. Thailand tries reverse psychology to get tourists

It's been a bad year for tourism in Thailand, and at first glance it looked like a new YouTube video was adding to the misery.

The video called I Hate Thailand drew more than a million views within days of being posted last week.

But it turns out the clip was produced by Thailand's tourism authority, using a strategy of reverse psychology to attract tourists after the country's image was battered by a military coup in May and the brutal murders of two British tourists on an idyllic beach in September.

The five-minute video shows an angry British tourist on a beach. He introduces himself as James and says his bag was stolen: "I hate this place. I hate Thailand," he tells a handheld camera. After mouthing off to a policeman, he meets an attractive Thai woman and finds reasons to like Thailand.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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VOICES

IT'S NOT ABOUT GHOMESHI

Metro's Kristen Thompson wishes we weren't talking about the disgraced radio host facing criminal charges, either. But to not talk about it is to ignore the countless victims of sexual assault that need us to keep the conversation going

KRISTEN THOMPSON
kristen.thompson@metronews.ca

Police try to clear a path as Jian Ghomeshi makes his way through a mob of media to a waiting vehicle at a Toronto court Wednesday.
NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Let me inundate you with more Jian Ghomeshi analysis, because I think it's important. In fact, I think it's a matter of life and death. Before you turn the page, hear me out.

Ghomeshi has been charged and the case is in the courts, but this isn't the time to turn our backs on the story.

If we do so, it will end an important dialogue about sexual violence, and that puts women in danger.

Dalya Israel, manager of victims services at Women Against Violence Against Women, a rape crisis centre in Vancouver, agrees.

High-profile cases of sexual assault are an opportunity to talk about what constitutes consent, and to educate men and boys about what it means to value another human being as equal, Israel said. Because of this, it's imperative to keep the discourse going.

For the women who have accused Ghomeshi of assault — especially those who may have to testify — these charges also signal the start of another chapter, one that can be hugely painful.

Victims of sex assault, who may have already told their story to police and their lawyer, may also have to testify at a preliminary inquiry and then in court, re-living their experience over and over for what could be months or years.

With women's sexuality already being highly scrutinized in our society, having it analyzed and questioned in court, and — in high-profile cases — in the media, is humiliating and degrading, said Israel.

"It's incredibly difficult to have to re-tell and talk about all of the fine details," she said.

Fear of humiliation and being re-victimized through the legal process is why Israel said around 70 per cent of women she works with don't want to go to police. Some general statistics would place that number even higher, at around 90 per cent.

These people often face depression and thoughts of suicide.

"There are many, many women that absolutely don't want to go through the process and feel like it would be way worse than just healing from the assault," she said. "But there are equally women that … want to be able to tell their truth in court and want somebody to know what this person has done to them.

"I think we've kind of seen that with … what's going on in the Cosby case," she said.

Israel said it can be validating for some women to know others have come forward.

"Some women feel like finally (they) don't have to keep a secret anymore."

So if you're sick of hearing about Ghomeshi, stop and think about why we're being oversaturated with this story.

It's not about Ghomeshi; it's about sexual violence.

And if we close the door on this story, we close the door on victims of assault.

Not everyone wants to report

"There are many, many women that absolutely don't want to go through the process."

Dalya Israel, rape crisis centre manager

Watershed moment won't come, but change is happening

EDWARD KEENAN
readers@metronews.ca

We believe you. We believe you. We believe you.

It's a message that has grown into a mantra in the court of public opinion over the past month, expressed in sadness and anger, in support of the women who have spoken about being allegedly sexually and physically abused by Jian Ghomeshi.

At the same time, it has suddenly become the message to women, ignored for years when they talked about being drugged and raped by Bill Cosby.

It was the message Justin Trudeau seemed to want to convey in expelling two members of his caucus over reports from women who are members of a different party.

Yesterday the police delivered the same message to three of the women who formally reported their stories about Ghomeshi:

We believe you.

The stories of these women have seized the consciousness of the moment. It seems possible to imagine that perhaps the same message will carry to every woman who is raped, assaulted, or harassed; to every victim of sexual abuse with a story she's been afraid to tell: We will believe you.

Or perhaps it has just become possible for many to allow themselves to hope for it.

My friend Denise Balkissoon wrote a column last month for the Globe and Mail that read like a rhetorical flamethrower incinerating any sanctimonious talk of "watershed moments" or cultural breakthroughs when it comes to violence against women.

She had reported domestic abuse to the police, saw the perpetrator sentenced to probation, and found the reporting process "essentially useless and thoroughly disappointing."

I hear and understand Denise. More than that, I believe her that we should resist the impulse to congratulate ourselves on reaching the promised land of wisdom and sensitivity. It's not a watershed.

But it is something. Something is shifting. It feels real.

There's a conversation going on, one that feels like progress.

It's not enough, and it will not suddenly and permanently transform the culture. But it feels like a crack has opened up in the understanding of many people. Including me.

As a man, a father, a citizen, a human being, I hope it is the start of something sustained, a longer process to better understanding, better treatment of each other, better lives.

There likely is no "watershed moment" to be had, because such societal changes are a gradual process.

But this month, leading up to the arrest of Ghomeshi this week, marks some kind of milestone in that process in Toronto and in Canada.

A time when many women started feeling more comfortable — or more compelled by anger — to talk about their experiences.

And when many of us were shocked into hearing them when we had been negligently deaf for years.

Here's a prayer offered in hope rather than expectation: Let "we believe you" become our response to any woman who tells us about how she has been hurt.

And then let us make real changes to our attitudes, behaviour and institutions so that fewer women have such stories to tell.

Progress

It feels like a crack has opened up in the understanding of many people. Including me.

metro

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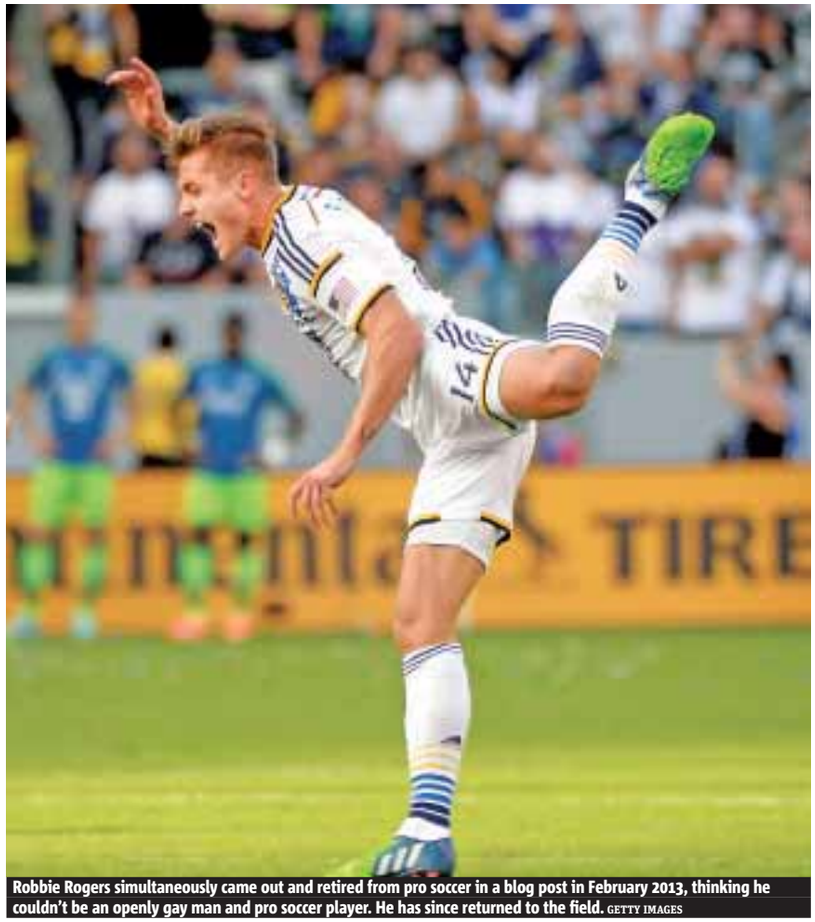
It's lonely being out at the game

Memoir. Robbie Rogers shares what it's like to be an openly gay pro athlete in the U.S.



Robbie Rogers simultaneously came out and retired from pro soccer in a blog post in February 2013, thinking he couldn't be an openly gay man and pro soccer player. He has since returned to the field. GETTY IMAGES

Los Angeles Galaxy soccer star Robbie Rogers wants some company, now that he's the last man standing as an openly gay athlete in a U.S. professional league.

Jason Collins recently retired from the NBA, and Michael Sam is without an NFL team. That leaves Rogers, the first openly gay player in Major League Soccer, hoping for a bigger fraternity.

"To be honest, I thought when I came out and Jason and Michael, I thought there'd be a chain reaction," Rogers said in a recent phone interview. "It's been a lot slower. I guess that just reminds me how big a problem it is in sports culture with homophobia. They don't feel comfortable."

Rogers chronicles his struggles with soccer, faith and family acceptance in the memoir Coming Out To Play, released this week by Penguin Books. It's a collaborative effort with Eric Marcus, who co-wrote Greg Louganis' book, and recollections from his mother and oldest sister. Rogers discusses growing up in Southern California, playing soccer in U.S. and European leagues and dealing with his sexuality.

On Sunday, he helped the Galaxy defeat Seattle 1-0 in the opener of the Western Conference finals. He's been a key defender this season after briefly retiring from the sport last year at age 25.

Rogers recently signed a contract extension, and the Galaxy players have embraced him. But locker rooms notoriously weren't a safe environment to talk about sexuality, except for teammates bragging about their heterosexual conquests.

"Like every locker room I'd been in for years now, 'fag' and 'gay' were tossed around like an all-purpose putdown," he wrote. "It cut deeper into an already raw wound."

So Rogers stifled his feelings, occasionally dating women to please his questioning teammates and family. After playing five seasons for the Columbus Crew in MLS, with stints in the Netherlands and England, he realized his happiness required living an authentic life. So he simultaneously came out and retired in a blog post in February 2013, thinking he couldn't be an openly gay man and a pro soccer player.

But an outpouring of support, conversations with Los Angeles star Landon Donovan and an invitation from Galaxy coach Bruce Arena to train with the team caused a change of heart.

Now the Galaxy are vying for a spot in the MLS final, Rogers is in a steady relationship and hoping more pro sports leagues provide education about diversity. That way, a teammate might think twice before throwing around gay slurs in the locker room.

Comfort zone

There are currently no openly gay players in the NFL, NHL or Major League Baseball. "There are a number of gay men playing professional sports, just not out," Rogers says. "In the end, it's really about guys coming out and changing the atmosphere by being in it. You definitely need to create the environment first where guys feel comfortable."

Baseball hired Billy Bean, who came out after his MLB career, to talk to all 30 teams about inclusion. Rogers says teams need to educate players on "racism, sexism and homophobia. The leagues should have a person their guys can go talk to, honestly. Talk about mental health or depression or guys wanting to come out."

Family/faith

Rogers heard negative comments about gay people at home, church, school and in the locker room. He considers his family "socially and politically conservative and very Catholic." Rogers says his family is loving and close, yet there were harsh comments from his father about not being a "fairy" and negative comments from his mother about gay celebrities and gay marriage.

"Growing up, I heard and saw plenty that made me think that being gay was bad, defective and sinful," Rogers wrote.

He came out to his family, despite the fear of rejection, before posting his blog. Now he says his parents, three sisters and younger brother are his biggest supporters.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Early years

Rogers was a prodigy growing up, playing organized soccer at four. As a teenager, he competed on the Orange County Blue Star team. Jurgen Klinsmann, now the coach of the U.S. national team, would occasionally stop by. His favourite players were European stars Thierry Henry and Zinedine Zidane. After helping Maryland win the 2005 NCAA title as a freshman, Rogers turned pro and went to the Netherlands. Playing for Leeds United in 2012, he sustained a concussion 12 minutes into his debut, colliding with an opponent while going for a header. An ankle injury intensified his depression and isolation, and he eventually returned to the U.S.

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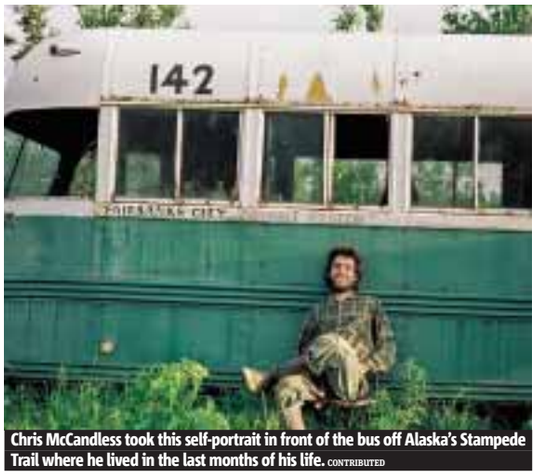
Exploring the darkness behind Into the Wild

Books. Sister of Chris McCandless hopes new revelations about their upbringing will help explain her brother's fatal Alaskan odyssey

JENNIFER PRITTIE
jennifer.prittie@metronews.ca



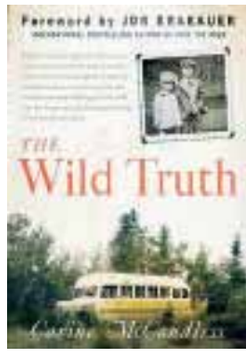
Chris McCandless took this self-portrait in front of the bus off Alaska's Stampede Trail where he lived in the last months of his life. CONTRIBUTED

It's hard to find someone who doesn't have an opinion about Chris McCandless. You likely already know the bare bones of his story: Young hiker walks into the Alaskan wilderness with a .22-calibre rifle and a 10-pound bag of rice, determined to live off the land, test his own mettle and come to grips with some weighty questions. Several months later, his emaciated body is found by hunters in an abandoned bus, along with a diary of his increasingly futile efforts to survive.

What would drive anyone to take such a risk? Author Jon Krakauer did his best to answer that in a high-profile article for Outside magazine, then in the highly regarded 1996 book Into the Wild.

Chris, it transpired, was a top student and athlete from a well-off Washington, D.C.-area family who was poised for success, but instead chose to renounce material goods, a career and, at times, society. Upon graduating from university, he had donated his savings to charity, burned his cash and set out on the road. His family didn't hear from him again.

The book was notably even-handed, but it provoked a staggeringly wide range of interpretation. To this day, McCandless debates still run at fever pitch online. As Krakauer writes in the introduction to The Wild Truth, a new memoir by Chris's younger sister Carine, "A lot of people came away from reading Into the Wild without grasping why Chris did what he did. Lacking explicit facts, they concluded that he was merely self-absorbed, unforgivably cruel to his parents, mentally ill, suicidal and/or witless."



The piece of the story that was missing, Carine now explains, is that she and Chris grew up in a home rife with domestic and emotional abuse, all while being forced by their parents to maintain the facade of a harmonious Christian family. "I would definitely say that the psychological things that we went through were more devastating than the physical things," she says in an interview. "Much more so. Those are the things that drove Chris out."

Quoted

"I just want people to have the facts. If it doesn't change their opinion about Chris, that's OK."

Carine McCandless, on the revelations in her memoir The Wild Truth

She says she told Krakauer all this while he was researching his book, so he would better understand her brother, but made him promise to keep the details out of print. "I really wanted to spare my parents, because I really felt that they would learn — obviously, I expected them to learn from Chris's death, because I couldn't imagine how they could not."

They didn't learn, by her account, and instead maintained their position that the family life had been fine — one reason that Carine became more open about their upbringing over the years, she says. By the time of the 2007 film adaptation by Sean Penn, she, too, had essentially cut off contact with her parents.

But her main motivation in going public has to do with the students she's met since Into the Wild was published. The book is required reading at many U.S. schools, and in going to speak at those schools, she found that students and teachers reacted differently when they knew the backstory. She realized being open about the abuse was helping others in the same situation.

Given that, maybe it's petty to wonder whether the new revelations could ever change the shape of the battle over Chris's legacy. "I just want people to have the facts. If it doesn't change their opinion about Chris, that's OK," she says. "The greatest inspiration and the greatest lessons come from truth, so I want that truth to be out there."

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Prince has closed his Twitter and Facebook accounts. AFP

Music. Prince vanishes from social media sites

Prince, whose distaste for the music industry's conventions is well known, has abruptly disappeared from social media after tentative efforts to promote his two new albums.

The star's Twitter and Facebook accounts have both disappeared and almost all videos from his official account had been taken off YouTube. He offered no explanation.

But his two latest albums, which he released in September, remained on the streaming service Spotify.

The move puts Prince at odds with most musicians, who consider social media a virtual obligation to fans.

Several stars — most famously Taylor Swift — have criticized Spotify, accusing it of insufficient payouts to artists, but have invested sustained energy in Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Prince used social media to promote the latest two albums but had barely disguised his lack of enthusiasm. He advertised a Facebook question-and-answer session after he joined the site but, after hours of queries, he responded to just one — an esoteric matter about audio tuning — by offering a link to an article. AFP

Movies. MacLaren will direct Wonder Woman

The director known for her work on Game of Thrones, Breaking Bad, The Walking Dead and The Leftovers has signed on to direct the first movie dedicated to the iconic DC superhero Wonder Woman.

Michelle MacLaren was reportedly in talks with Warner for months but her involvement was just made official.

The Wonder Woman movie will likely be the first in a trilogy, starting out in the 1920s on the character's Amazonian island. The following instalment is set to take place in the 1930s and '40s during the Second World War, with the last film seeing her join the Justice League alongside Batman, Aquaman and Superman.

The anticipation will build in the meantime, as Gal Gadot is set to make her debut as Wonder Woman in the 2016 movie Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice, before starring in other Justice League projects.

Gal Gadot will play Wonder Woman in the movies. WARNER BROS/DC COMICS

Wonder Woman is to start filming by the end of 2015. The movie is slated for release in 2017, one year after Batman v Superman. AFP

Movies

Ridley Scott won't direct Blade Runner 2

Although Ridley Scott is still producing the sequel to his 1982 Blade Runner film and working on the script, someone else will direct it, he tells Variety.

Busy with Prometheus, The Martian, his Ebola-themed TV project and his production activities, Scott had to make a choice.

He also confirmed that Harrison Ford will once again take the role of Rick Deckard, although he won't lead the cast.

Since the film will follow a three-act storyline, the filmmaker explained: "Harrison is very much part of this one, but really it's about finding him; he comes in in the third act." AFP

Film

Birdman tops Independent Spirit nominees

Surreal theatre drama Birdman starring Michael Keaton topped nominations for the Independent Spirit movie awards announced Tuesday, with nods in six categories.

The Spirit awards, which aim to honour excellence in independent film, will be handed out on Feb. 21.

Birdman, about a former superhero movie star attempting to resurrect his career on Broadway, was nominated for best feature, best actor, best supporting actor and actress, best director and best cinematography.

The other nominees for best feature were Boyhood, Love is Strange, Selma and Whiplash. AFP

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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Analysis

Jaden Smith GETTY IMAGES

The wit and wisdom of Jaden Smith

To celebrate Thanksgiving in the U.S., we're going to overdo it with the wit and wisdom of the incomparable Jaden Smith. Here, some of his best work:

@officialjaden
I Don't Want You Guys To Think Because I Was Born In America That I Speak And Abide By English Grammar. I Speak Jaden, Indefinitely.

@officialjaden
I've Bin Drinking Distilled Water For So Long That When I Drink Normal Water It Feels Like I'm Swallowing Huge Chunks Of Aluminum.

@officialjaden
Every 7 Years Your Body Is Completely Replaced With Entirely New Cells So Just Because You Look The Same Doesn't Mean You Are.

This week in Friends reunion denials

It's become apparent that part of being in the cast of Friends means fielding questions about a theoretical reunion at every single interview, as Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, Matthew Perry, Matt LeBlanc and David Schwimmer are learning. OK, maybe not so much Schwimmer because no one's been interviewing him lately, but still. As Graham Norton recently asked Jennifer Aniston, "Do you and the other Friends just think, 'Why don't we just do the reunion so people will stop wanging on about it?'" — which is clever, but still a way of wanging on about it. So, what do the latest crop of denials — or the opposite — look like? Here you go:

NED EHRBAR/METRO IN HOLLYWOOD

Jennifer Aniston

"I say we just wait until we're really much older and be just Golden Friends because then you wouldn't have the comparisons like, 'Oh, look at Joey. What happened to them?'" Or: "Oh no, dead Friends. Then we'll know that there's no reunion to have."

Courteney Cox

"It's not going to happen. Let me tell you something: There's six Friends, and I've been trying to put together a cast dinner for 10 years. It doesn't happen! I can get the girls to come, maybe Matthew Perry. Matt LeBlanc cancelled last time right at the last minute, Schwimmer lives (in New York City), so it's just not gonna happen."

Lisa Kudrow

"I'll go for it. A whole season, because to spend that much time with those people again would be heaven."

Matt LeBlanc

"I'm not tired of getting asked that question at all. As far as a reunion project, that's just not in the cards ... I think it's best to imagine what those characters are doing now versus to see those characters. No one wants to see us in our 40s. Joey's still struggling as an actor. It'd just be sad."

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SHOPPERS DRUG MART

Winter's hottest fashion trends

The cold winter season has declared its arrival, but there's no shortage of must-have new trends to keep you looking chic all season long. We asked two of New York City's top fashion bloggers to break down the looks you need to get your hands on now.

METRO NEWS IN NEW YORK

Oversized coats and pastels

Many of the leading looks this winter are all about length. Case in point: dramatically oversized coats paired with mini-dresses and above-the-knee skirts — an unexpected look for the winter season.

"It's a big surprise when you think about the colder months," says fashion blogger Chanel van der Meijden of Cocorosa.

Also going strong in outerwear is the pastel-coloured coat. When it comes to bundling up, shades of soft pink and baby blue are all the rage.

Forever 21 Textured Longline Coat, $72, forever21.com

Banana Republic Teddy Coat, $275, bananarepublic.ca

Above-the-knee boots

Playful lengths are also extending to footwear. Hot this winter are thigh-high, over-the-knee boots. A unique spin on the look takes the form of flats, says Framel.

"We're so accustomed to seeing the over-the-knee, high-heel, slightly sexy version," she says. "A flat boot is especially fresh, like the coolest interpretation this season."

Military-inspired shoes are another look to invest in. Boots with lots of buckling details and hints of that signature olive green are particularly popular. If it's a more feminine look you're after, booties are a dainty alternative.

"Another shoe trend that totally excites me is the kitten-heeled, pointed-toe, lace-up bootie," says van der Meijden.

Clarey Over-the-Knee Boots, $239, guess.ca

Frye Melissa Over-the-Knee Boot, $648, thebay.com

Knits, knits, knits

One of the strongest looks this winter is knitwear. On the runway, this includes head-to-toe knit suits and trousers. The trend is really all about size, also taking the form of chunky woven sweaters and bulky knitwear tops.

"The way it's being translated [from the runway] is really big, oversized sweaters and extreme turtlenecks," says Kelly Framel, creative director of the wildly popular site The Glamourai. "Everything this season is just so big, so extreme — they're almost dresses."

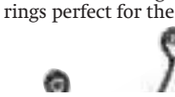
Julia Titika Activewear Sweater, $72, titika.ca

Big ol' earrings

It's official: Big earrings are back. While the trend for the last few seasons has been more about refined, delicate jewelry, be prepared to see more big-statement pieces this winter.

"The fashion version of that is to wear only one (earring) and to wear the biggest earring possible," says Framel. "But in general, these chandelier and interesting statement earrings are definitely coming back."

Translation? Big, glitzy earrings perfect for the holidays.



Modern Flapper Drop Earrings, $34, urbanoutfitters.com

H&M Earrings, $19, hm.com

ELLE 3

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PORTAGE PLACE

Set the scene for entertaining

It's going to be a busy month of cocktail parties, dinners and gift exchanges, so you may as well do it with style. Here are some home-entertaining essentials to help get you through the holiday season

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Put all your ice in one bucket

No more filling the bathtub with ice to chill your bottles. From serving bubbly to holding a modern flower arrangement, this one does it all. Kate Spade New York's Two of a Kind ice bucket, $89, TheBay.com.

Nothing but the wild, wild best for your guests

Add some festive Cartier-chic to the powder room with the look of linen. Wild Christmas 16-count Paper Guest Towels, $9, BedBathAndBeyond.ca.

Go on — fly your neat-freak flag

Put an end to that pile of black coats being thrown on the bed. Dark Wood Suit Hangers, 60-pack, $75, Walmart.com.

Always a glass act

Class things up a bit: It's glass over plastic — always! Champagne glasses, $2, Dollarama.ca.

Tray magnifique

It's a satellite serving bar, handy side table or sparkly multi-candle display pedestal. Giles Tray Table, $229, UrbanBarn.com.

Balsam bouquet

Create the smell of an enchanted forest with the evergreen scent of Fraser fir, crushed balsam needles, spruce, cedar and holly. Royal Forest Candle, $24, Crabtree-Evelyn.ca.

ALL PHOTOS: CONTRIBUTED

Make room: Rack up those pots and pans

DIY. Recycle common household items to create racks that free up kitchen space for holiday feast-making

'Tis the season to gather friends and family around the kitchen table to enjoy good company and yummy food.

With all the cooking and baking that accompanies the holiday season, some extra storage room is always valuable.

Hanging pots and pans is a crafty way to create much needed space and keep them accessible.

Read on for ideas on how to create a rack to hang cookware using recycled materials around the home.

More kitchen renos

Get inspired by even more kitchen renovations with all new back-to-back episodes of Kitchen Crashers, on Wednesdays at 10 p.m. ET/PT on DIY Network Canada.

Adapt a wall-mounted coat rack to hold pots and pans instead. ISTOCK

Lift it

Suspend an old window frame above a counter top or kitchen island to hang up cookware.

Before getting started, it's important to select an area and access the ceiling joists to determine how much weight the frame can support. This is a crucial step before hanging anything from the ceiling.

Measure the distance between the ceiling and the floor to make sure the pots are at arm's length, but not too low.

Don't have access to a window frame? Try using an old bicycle wheel or a coffee table frame.

Hang it

Use a wall mounted coat rack. If the wood and hooks are being recycled, add a personal touch to them.

Sand the wood plank for a cleaner look or paint it a different colour to match the rest of the kitchen.

Spray-painting the hooks is another option. If necessary, proceed to screw the hooks onto the plank.

Consider the number of pots and pans you want to hang up and make sure you have enough materials and that the hooks are spaced out accordingly. Select the desired area and install.

Lean it

Use an old ladder and lean it against the cupboards or any other convenient area. A ladder that has rounded and skinny rungs is ideal for this type of project. Garage sales or flea markets are a great place to find various sizes and colours.

Next, measure and note the rungs' circumference. Based on these measurements and the number of pots to hang, purchase steel s-hooks. Place the hooks on the ladder's rungs and hang the cookware.

Get the hang of it

Hanging pots and pans is a crafty way to create much-needed space and keep them accessible.

C-c-cold? Generator could do power of good

Home equipment.
Don't get caught out: Consider the pros and cons of built-in and portable generators

Although built-ins, left, are more expensive and require installation, they turn on automatically in power outages. Portables, right, powered by gasoline, need to be manually started. GENERAC/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

As storms have become more severe in many parts of the country and power outages more frequent, home generators have gone from luxury items to mainstream ones.

Prices have come down, thanks to growing demand and cheaper technology. But the idea of buying and installing one can still be daunting, mainly because there are so many variables to consider. Much depends on how much you want the generator to do.

Lets take a look at some generator basics:

Built-in or portable?

The biggest question is whether to buy a built-in generator, which has to be professionally installed and runs on natural gas, or a portable unit, which is cheaper and runs on gasoline.

The built-in kicks in automatically in a power outage; the portable has to be started manually.

Built-in generators look similar to air conditioners, usually sitting on the side of a house. They are more expensive than portables; installation could run $1,500-plus.

But they have one big advantage, says Ken Collier, editor-in-chief at The Family Handyman: Once a built-in generator is put in place, you don't have to touch it again.

"They are a great choice for people for whom spending a few thousand bucks for the security of having power is worth it," Collier says.

Baseline cost of a built-in

<$2,000

Generac recently debuted a baseline built-in generator for less than $2,000 — a far cry from the $8,000 a lesser powered machine cost 20 years ago, Minick says. A portable generator, which runs on gasoline, costs about half that.

Portable generators, on the other hand, can be powerful enough to do the trick. But they have to be started manually, and you must have gasoline on hand before any storm.

You can't have the gasoline so long that it becomes unusable: Collier says gasoline goes stale after about a month.

In addition, turning on a portable generator often requires several steps, which isn't necessarily easy in stormy, dark conditions.

There are safety concerns, too. Because they are powered by gasoline, portable generators emit carbon monoxide, so they must be set up away from the home and windows.

How much power?

Once you've decided what kind of generator to get, you need to determine how powerful it should be.

Do you want to just keep the fridge and a few lights running, for instance, or do you want to light up the whole house?

Russ Minick, vice-president of the country's largest home-generator manufacturer, Generac, recommends buying a generator with at least 5,000 watts, which he says is the minimum needed to power just a refrigerator and lights. Running air conditioning or heat requires more powerful units, he says.

Generac has a sizing calculator on its website, generac.com, to help people decide how powerful a unit they want. The bigger the generator, the more it costs.

The bigger picture

Of course, buying a generator is just one piece of being ready for a power outage, Collier notes. Gassing up your car is crucial in storm preparedness, since it can provide everything from heat and a radio to a place to charge your phone when power goes out.

Having "modern" flashlights — ones with LED lights and lithium batteries — is another priority, Collier says. They use little energy and are powered by batteries that last for years.

"Preparedness is very much a personal philosophy, and spending hundreds or even thousands of dollars being ready is very much a personal decision," Collier says.

Even people who own generators can't let their guard down, he says.

"Generators are not just something that allows you to push a button and be back in business," Collier says. "You have to take care of them. You have to understand what you have to do with the power and what not to do."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Generators require TLC

"They are not necessarily a simple answer. But they are very effective."

Ken Collier, editor-in-chief at The Family Handyman

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SWEET DEAL FOR LUXURY SUITES

ANTARES IS IN THE HEART OF WINNIPEG

Living in the heart of Winnipeg has never been more convenient than now, with the conversion of the Place Louis Riel Suite Hotel into the modern residential Antares Luxury Suites. While there are still units available, time is running out on an amazing, limited-time, introductory move-in offer.

"When you move in on or before Dec. 1, you'll receive free MTS or Shaw cable and high-speed Internet for six months," says leasing manager Ekeen Saad, adding that some conditions apply.

And while cable and Internet (the building is wired with full fibre optic, making it one of the fastest buildings in the city for Internet use) make the ensuite more entertaining, Antares Luxury Suites has completed its external makeover, which continues to make it the place to see — and be seen — in downtown Winnipeg.

"The exterior of our building has changed dramatically," Saad says. "We have replaced all the main floor windows and doors."

It's all part of the continued efforts to reinforce Antares Luxury Suites as the place for people looking to live, work, and play in the heart of Winnipeg.

"We're right downtown, right next to the MTS Centre for concertgoers and hockey fans, we're close to Centennial Hall, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, and more. These open-concept modern suites are for those looking for style, sophistication, and luxury, as well as being able to step outside and enjoy downtown Winnipeg."

There are fewer than 100 suites available for rent. Eventually, there will be 315 suites available once the conversion from the hotel suites is completed.

The downtown location, proximity to the Forks, dining, and shopping venues has been appealing to young professionals. With a walk score of 97, the area also offers convenient access to public transportation and cabs.

Antares Luxury Suites boasts that it's downtown Winnipeg's fastest high-speed Internet wired rental building, with studio, one-, or two-bedroom suites available. Rental rates include heat, water, and hydro, as well as on-site maintenance staff. In addition, the facility will be offering an Internet café, extensive fitness facilities, a residents' lounge and activity room, a business centre, and on-site laundry facilities.

For more information, call 204-944-8445 or visit antaresluxurysuites.ca.

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Call 1-888-726-5788 or visit AntaresLuxurySuites.ca for floor plans, availability and more!
Offer is subject to change. Some conditions apply. See leasing agent for complete details.

Homes in the heart of a community

Ruth Gardens in North Kildonan

For people looking for luxury adult living in the heart of an established community, Ruth Gardens in North Kildonan, has it all.

"We're getting a lot of interest from people who live in the area, who are either empty nesters or are looking to downsize," says Mike Ambrose, marketing and communications officer with Edison Properties. "People just love living in this community. It's very much a neighbourhood with strong community ties."

Ruth Gardens offers three buildings, interconnected through the first four floors. The first floors are dedicated to commercial, with residential units starting on the second floor. The first building is scheduled to open for occupancy Dec. 15, with the remaining two scheduled to open in April 2015.

"The units are done in modern, high-quality, luxury-style; all units have breakfast counters and some will have an island," Ambrose says. "They look more like condo units than what you would normally expect from an apartment."

There are 13 different layouts in the 214 suites, which range from 628 to 1,209 square feet and one- and two-bedroom designs. Utilities are included, including heat, water, and hydro. There are ensuite laundry facilities and each unit features private, covered balconies. Residents have access to a fitness room and can obtain either surface or underground parking.

"The buildings have community and multi-purpose rooms, which are often used by social clubs and groups," Ambrose says, adding that while community is a focus, residents can be assured that when they want their privacy, it will be there. "It's a secure building with card access. And it's all concrete construction, so it's very sound-resistant."

Located near bicycle trails, the Rossmere Golf & Country Club, and Kilcona Park, there are plenty of opportunities for residents to get out and enjoy Winnipeg's natural beauty. And with open houses starting at the end of November, now is the time to get out and experience Ruth Gardens — your new home in the heart of the community.

Open house hours are: Monday to Friday, from 4-7 p.m.; Saturday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, please visit edisonproperties.ca, call 204-515-5529 or email inforg@edisonproperties.ca.

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LUXURIOUS ADULT APARTMENT LIVING IN THE HEART OF NORTH KILDONAN

Ruth Gardens

Suite Amenities:
- Open concept kitchen and living room
- Quartz countertops
- In-suite utility rooms with washer and dryer
- Private, fully covered balconies
- All two bedroom units include luxurious ensuite bathrooms and walk-in closets

Building Amenities:
- Underground and surface parking
- Secure building with card access system
- Fitness room
- Common room available for small parties and meetings
- Sound resistant construction
- Full time on-site Resident Manager

Neighbourhood Amenities:
- Conveniently located close to public transit routes
- Within walking distance of Rossmere Golf & Country Club
- Accessible bike and walking trails
- Nearby parks include Kildonan and Kilcona Parks
- Close to restaurants, shopping centres, and all school levels

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Fling away those frozen fish sticks

Perch-in-a-Basket with Tartar Sauce.
Bring an old pub favourite to your table

"I love everything about perch. Catching it, cooking it, eating it — what's not to love? I recently found out that a friend of mine ... even had it for her wedding dinner. I wish I had thought of that!" writes Moira Sanders in her book The Kitchen Table Cookbook.

1. Combine the flour, salt and pepper in a bowl. Whisk the eggs and milk together in a second bowl. Place the finely crushed saltines in a third bowl. Place the bowls in this order next to the stove where you will be cooking the fish.

2. Heat about 2 inches (5 cm) of oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Use a deep-fry thermometer if you have one — the ideal temperature is 375 F (190 C) — or check that the oil is ready by dropping a small piece of bread into the hot oil to see if it bubbles right away. Preheat the oven to 250 F (120 C).

3. Dredge each fillet in the flour mixture, egg mixture and finally in the crushed saltines. Carefully place 3 or 4 fillets in the hot oil. Turn the fillets once they have turned a dark golden on one side. When the pieces are done, remove from the oil and place on a baking sheet lined with paper towels.

4. Place the finished fish in the oven to keep warm and continue frying the rest of fillets. Serve hot with Tartar Sauce.

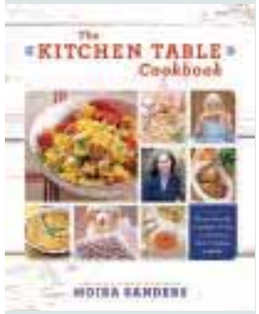
Tartar Sauce

1. Combine all of the ingredients in a medium bowl and mix thoroughly. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate until needed.

RECIPES FROM THE KITCHEN TABLE COOKBOOK BY MOIRA SANDERS (WHITECAP, 2014)

Cookbook of the Week

Gather around for family favourites



Sometimes you want to go back to basics. Enter The Kitchen Table Cookbook by Moira Sanders.

The release offers recipes that have been tried, tweaked, sampled, savoured and passed on. It covers all the bases for feeding your family during all seasons.

The chapters are divided into quicker (weekday) recipes and more involved weekend or special occasion dishes. Among them are: Fresh Sesame Bread Sticks, Sunday Roast Beef Tenderloin, Seared Salmon, Stuffed Shells, Malted Milk Cookies and more. **METRO**

This recipe serves four to six. FROM THE KITCHEN TABLE COOKBOOK

Ingredients

Perch-in-a-Basket
- 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) fine sea salt
- 1/2 tsp (2.5 ml) black pepper
- 2 eggs
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) milk
- 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) finely ground saltine crackers (about 1 1/2 sleeves of saltines)
- vegetable oil for frying
- 2 lb (1 kg) fresh yellow perch fillets (skin on is fine)

Tartar Sauce
- 1 cup (250 ml) mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) finely chopped dill pickle
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) chopped chives
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp (5 ml) Worcestershire sauce

This recipe serves four. FROM THE KITCHEN TABLE COOKBOOK

Snack. Broccoli with Cheddar Cheese Sauce

1. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the flour and cook for 1–2 minutes, stirring constantly. Whisk the milk into the butter mixture and continue cooking until the sauce is smooth and thick. Add the grated cheese, salt and pepper. Taste for seasoning. Keep warm until needed.

2. Bring a large pot with 1-inch (2.5 cm) of water in the bottom to a boil. Place a steamer basket in the pot and fill with the broccoli florets. Cover the pot and let the broccoli steam for about 3 minutes. Serve the broccoli hot with the cheese sauce on the side.

Ingredients
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) butter
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) all-purpose flour
- 1 cup (250 ml) whole milk
- 2 cups (500 ml) grated sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) fine sea salt
- Pinch ground black pepper
- 1 large head of broccoli (or 2 smaller heads), trimmed and cut into florets

metro
BLACK FRIDAY
Thursday, November 27, 2014

Historically an American shopping holiday, Black Friday has grown in Canada the past few years. BERNARD WEIL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Forget Boxing Day, this is the real shopping day

Start your wallets. In the minds of Canadian Shoppers, Black Friday is second to none for best deals

A crowd of shoppers waits outside the Target store in Lisbon, Conn., ahead of Black Friday. SEAN D. ELLIOT/THE DAY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

VAWN HIMMELSBACH
For Metro

Is Black Friday the new Boxing Day? The shopping holiday from south of the border is, for the first time, winning over Canadians.

Thirty-three per cent of Canadian shoppers expect to find the best deals on Black Friday, while the same number expect to find the best deals on Boxing Day, according to Accenture's 2014 holiday shopping survey. This is a significant shift from last year when only 22 per cent of Canadians expected to find the best deals on Black Friday.

While Black Friday may have started out as a novelty, it "snuck up on us," said Kelly Askew, managing director of strategy with Accenture Inc., a global consulting company.

"We've been watching the importance of Black Friday climb year over year," he said. "This is the first year Black Friday is as important as Boxing Day in the minds of Canadians. If this trend continues we'll start to see less and less focus on Boxing Day."

The survey found that 61 per cent of Canadians plan to shop on Black Friday — a trend largely driven by younger shoppers (81 per cent of those aged 18 to 24 will hit the shops on Nov. 28).

There's also a move away from cross-border shopping, said Askew. This is, in part, due to the weakening loonie, which is making those U.S. deals a little less attractive. But it's also because Canadian retailers have started to take Black Friday more seriously.

Canadian shopping trends

- Canadian consumers like to pre-shop on their smartphone or tablet in preparation for Black Friday, said Jennifer Lee, senior retail leader with Deloitte Canada.
- About 38 per cent of Canadians plan to pre-shop before Black Friday, according to Deloitte's 2014 Holiday Retail Outlook.

"It's not just a couple of items on sale. (Retailers) are putting a big mark on their planning calendar," said Askew.

"It's kind of a perfect storm for Canadian retailers," he said. "They're seeing a heightened interest in Black Friday ... and Canadians say they're going to shop domestically."

And, on average, Canadians plan to spend $250 more than they did last year during the holiday season.

"They need to be ready for that crush," said Askew. "The last thing retailers want is to have people walking out the door or dropping off the website in frustration because they may not be able make the purchase," he said. After all, they can always come back on Boxing Day.

"The question is always: Is it going to be a better deal on Boxing Day when retailers don't have as many prospects of selling?" said Maureen Atkinson, senior partner at J.C. Williams Group, a retail consulting firm.

When Black Friday first came to Canada, she was sceptical. "Black Friday has a meaning in the U.S.," she said. "For Canadians it doesn't make as much sense because it isn't a holiday."

Black Friday follows American Thanksgiving, when most retailers in the U.S. offer promotional sales to kick off the holiday shopping season.

Many Americans have the day off (or take it off, since American Thanksgiving always falls on Thursday).

In 2008, several large Canadian retailers started offering Black Friday deals, mainly to discourage cross-border shopping.

But the shopping holiday finally appears to be catching on here — perhaps because retailers no longer have to wait until Dec. 26 to find out if they'll meet their annual revenue goals. If they have a stellar Black Friday, it takes the pressure off Boxing Day, said Askew.

Shoppers, snatch up these great gifts

Get the scoop.

Here are some sale items to cross off your list

JACLYN TERSIGNI
For Metro

Music and food make the world go round. Have a home gourmet and amateur audiophile on your gift-giving list this holiday? Consider shopping for these ideas on Black Friday.

THE GOURMET

Keurig 2.0 K300 Coffee Brewing System with carafe
Brew one cup or four, plus go for bold with the system's strong setting.
$129.99; Canadian Tire.

KitchenAid Professional 5™ Plus Series Stand Mixer
Ten speeds and a five-quart bowl take (almost) all the work out of kneading doughs and batters.
$599.99; Canadian Tire.

The Oh She Glows Cookbook: Vegan Recipes To Glow From The Inside Out by Angela Liddon
Recipes to satisfy even the most ardent anti-vegans, from self-trained Canadian chef, food photographer and blogger.
$29; Indigo.

Monogram Cheeseboard
A perfect hostess gift, this monogrammed cheeseboard comes with a spreader and its own resting spot.
$19.50; Indigo.

Saveur: The New Classics Cookbook
More than 1,000 of the world's best recipes for today's kitchen by the editors of Saveur Magazine. A diverse curation of the best recipes from Saveur culinary magazine, covering every type of cuisine.
$45; Indigo.

T-fal ActiFry Healthy Fryer
For the health-conscious french fry lover, the ActiFry requires only one tablespoon of oil for fries, chicken wings and other fried goodies.
$189.98; Amazon.ca.

THE MUSIC LOVER

Leonard Cohen Everybody Knows by Harvey Kubernik
Even casual Cohen fans will be roused by this exploration of the legendary Canadian poet, singer-songwriter and author.
$35; Indigo.

iHome iD48 Portable Rechargeable Stereo System for iPad/iPhone/iPod
You don't have to choose between charging your device and letting the music blast with this dual-purpose stereo.
$99; Indigo.

Frends with Benefits Taylor Headphones in Rose Gold
Beautiful to look at and listen to. A three-button mic adds volume, music, and phone controls.
$199; Indigo.

Casio LK-240 61-Key Portable Touch Sensitive Personal Keyboard with AHL Technology
For the independent learner, this keyboard's built-in education system breaks lessons down into small, step-by-step units.
$219.99; Amazon.ca.

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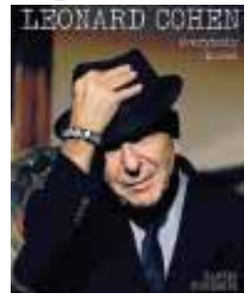

Sennheiser HD598 Headphones
For those serious about sound, these high-performance headphones deliver impeccable sound quality through luxe velour ear pads.
$252.83; Amazon.ca.

Clockwise from bottom left, KitchenAid Professional 5™ Plus Series Stand Mixer; Monogram Cheeseboard; Sennheiser HD598 Headphones; Leonard Cohen Everybody Knows; Casio LK-240 61-Key Portable Touch Sensitive Personal Keyboard, and T-fal ActiFry Healthy Fryer.

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Looking for deals? Yes, there's an app for that

For Americans, Black Friday is the busiest shopping day of the year. For Canadians, it's an opportunity to save serious cash, as retailers north of the border jump on the Black Friday bandwagon. Each year, Black Friday grows in popularity among Canadian retailers. Here are some useful apps to cash in on savings.

Flipp
Free on iOS, Android
A simple way to browse through deals not only on Black Friday, but every day of the year. Flipp gathers flyers from stores in your area and displays them on your smartphone or tablet. You can search for particular products to see if they are on sale, or browse through deals on at your favourite store. If you find something of interest, the app lets you clip out the ad with virtual scissors and saves it to your phone.

RedFlagDeals
Free on iOS, Android
What began as a popular deal-finding website has now turned into a fantastic money-saving app. Deals are automatically mapped out for you on your smartphone based on your location. You can also browse through flyers from your favourite store so you can make a plan of attack before heading out on Black Friday. What really sets this app apart is the discussion board where users post and share deals with other users.

Amazon
Free on iOS, Android and Windows Phone
Don't want to venture out into the cold? Sometimes it's easier to shop right from your smartphone or tablet. Amazon's user-friendly interface makes it simple to track down deals. Search for items by keyword, or scan a barcode on a product and Amazon will track it down in its database for you to purchase.

Sale Saver Shopping Calculator
$1.99 on iOS
Know exactly how much you will pay for something before you head to the till. Type in the price of your item, the percentage it is marked down, then sit back as the app calculates the sales tax so you know the final tally. Works in Canadian, U.S., and other currencies. A free version is also available, but you will have to deal with pop-up ads and restricted features.

Point Inside Shopping and Travel
Free on iOS, Android
If want to cash in on the best Black Friday deals, you will need a game plan. This app offers maps of most major malls across Canada and the U.S., showing you where individual stores are located. You can also search for the nearest washroom, ATM or restaurant when you need a break.

MIKE YAWNEY/FOR METRO

URBAN PLANET

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Black Friday survival guide

Essential tips for shoppers. Get home with both wallet and sanity intact

KEITH CARMAN
For Metro

Black Friday. The day after U.S. Thanksgiving marks the beginning of the Christmas shopping season and yields promotional sales of unheralded savings.

Over the years, Black Friday has seen its share of sore thumbs unable to play nicely but, all-in-all, the combination of holiday cheer, specials and take-home goodies brings smiles to even the biggest Grinches. It's no wonder retailers are literally bombarded with shoppers fighting — figuratively and occasionally literally — to spend.

Due to these throngs of people battling for limited stock, one is best-served to prepare for a sales event spanning two countries and hundreds of stores. Here are a few simple strategies to get ahead of the the retail game.

Strategize

It may seem obvious but as body-crushing crowds at past Black Friday events have proven, it pays to plan ahead. Look through flyers. Go in early and find out where items are located in the store.

Pick a few "essentials" and head straight for them as opposed to overextending, risking getting lost either in-store or amongst the sea of others looking for their own deals. If you are going to make the most of Black Friday, this is a mission; a stakeout, not a simple hunt-and-peck for a good deal. Everyone else will most likely have thought ahead. So should you.

Pack light

This foray is equal parts sprint and marathon. While the inclination might be to prepare for a cold wait outside of stores in order to secure a jockeying position, one runs the risk of being bogged down by non-essentials. Is that second tablet really necessary? It might take up vital space or, worse yet, slow one down when scurrying through the isles to hunt down that incredible smart television deal. Moreover, hauling more possessions simply means more weight.

Get help

Bring a second — or third — set of hands.

If carrying everything but the kitchen sink is vital to maintaining happiness before the "go" moment, have other bodies manage junk. Bring non-shoppers along to courier the camping setup back to the car and hightail it into the store to steer carts.

Family first? Maybe not

To that extent, while loved ones can be a wonderful tool at helping to haul, keeping eyes on your path, their whereabouts and specials can prove taxing.

When possible, any high-maintenance family are best-served (as are you) keeping away. Do everyone the favour: Make it a holiday for them, staying at home while you frolic amongst the aisles.

"You don't always know what to expect from other people," said mother Heather Ostrander, 39. "You may have the best intentions at perusing some specials but others can be pretty heavy-handed about their goals. I'd rather keep my son away from potential grumps and pick up whatever we're really looking for."

Don't let shopping knock you off your feet. SHUTTERSTOCK

Bring an army

Bring a second — or a third — set of hands. If carrying everything but the kitchen sink is vital to maintaining happiness before the "go" moment, have other bodies manage junk.

Bargain hunters shop for discounted merchandise at Macy's on Black Friday in 2011 in New York City. GETTY IMAGES

Afraid of being trampled?

RICK MCGINNIS
For Metro

Maybe it's the name, but Black Friday has acquired a sinister reputation that seems undeserved for an annual shopping event focused on getting a really great deal on a TV, a video game console or a life-sized doll.

It's a reputation that Boxing Day, its monster sale big brother, doesn't have though that the week-long post-Christmas shopping gauntlet — Canada's contribution to retail frenzy — remains a bigger event. The stories began to emerged almost 10 years ago, starting with a Walmart in Columbus, Ohio, where nine shoppers were injured as a crowd surged into the store to grab gift certificates dropped from the ceiling. Every year, they were reported: The salesperson who was trampled to death in 2008 when a crowd outside an upstate New York Walmart broke down the doors; a woman at a California Walmart in 2011 who pepper-sprayed fellow customers lined up to buy an Xbox.

The good news is this sort of thing almost never happens north of the border. Prime among them: Black Friday doesn't happen in Canada during a statutory holiday. American Thanksgiving is the customary prelude to Black Friday in the U.S., so lineups will begin hours or even days in advance.

"It definitely started as an American phenomenon," said Dan Christie, Future Shop general manager in Vancouver. "But I think as Canadians we're a little bit nicer than that, aren't we?"

Deal hunting? Make it a road trip with friends

The deals, the selection and the experience: All three may drive Canadians to shop in the U.S. on, or close to, Black Friday.

Sales tax differences won't likely shift shopper from one state to another.

Some Canadians favour Pennsylvania, with its statewide six per cent sales tax, compared to New York's sales tax of up to 8.75 per cent. But many New York communities forego their share of the sales tax on clothing items valued at less than US$110, pushing the tax rate down to four per cent.

Distance is likely a factor. Erie, Pa., is 3.5 hours from Toronto, while Buffalo is a two-hour drive. Gasoline prices? Fuel sells in Irving, N.Y., for about 30 cents per litre less than in Toronto.

You could let someone else drive. Adrian Bowen, of blackfridaytrip.com, will send three 55-passenger buses to Buffalo from Toronto for Black Friday. He says the 16-hour excursion is all about the bargains.

"Even though in Canada they're trying to have their own Black Friday shopping, it cannot be compared to what we actually see in the States."

He said, as an example, that a Michael Kors handbag in Toronto can cost CDN$300, but in Buffalo-area stores "you can get that bag for US$150."

Bowen says the bus trips, by "hard-core shoppers" with an average age of 25 years and one goal in sight, are, "an extremely social experience."

Stephen Fine, who runs the shopping website, crossborder-shopping.ca, said, "I find that there's a lot to offer in Buffalo." Fine said that for shoppers responding to his website, the No. 1 reason for shopping is cost savings, which can range from 30 per cent to 50 per cent. The second reason is the wider selection of merchandise. The third reason: It's an inexpensive and fun holiday.

R. Jacqueline D'Souza, a former Torontonian who now spends much of her time in New York with her real estate company, used to be a committed cross-border shopper, "but these days I find the long lines to get across the border, as well as the lengthy lines at stores, to be quite a turnoff."

Having said that, she said the Buffalo discount outlets offer year-round "discount clothing for children which is great for parents." BILL BEAN/FOR METRO

Consider Niagara Falls, N.Y., as a shopping destination — and make a weekend out of it. GETTY IMAGES

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Atletico routs Olympiakos

Koke jumps on Atletico Madrid teammate Mario Mandzukic after his third goal capping a 4-0 win over Olympiakos on Wednesday in Madrid. Scan the image with your Metro News app for a roundup of Wednesday's action around Europe. DENIS DOYLE/GETTY IMAGES

Tiny Banks makes his way amid giants

At 153 pounds. After five punt returns and a playoff-record 226 yards, pint-sized Ticat gets noticed big-time

Hamilton Tiger-Cats wide receiver Brandon Banks stretches during a practice Wednesday in Vancouver. The Tiger-Cats face the Calgary Stampeders Sunday in the 102nd CFL Grey Cup. PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANDIAN PRESS

At six-foot-five and 325 pounds, Peter Dyakowski fits in nicely when it comes to the super-sized world of pro football.

A Caterpillar would have a hard time moving the Hamilton Tiger-Cats offensive lineman.

But the big man couldn't help but be envious of pint-sized teammate Brandon Banks on the trip out to the Grey Cup.

"I like being a big guy, but we were flying out on the plane (Tuesday), we were eating our dinner and all the O-lineman were like this," said Dyakowski, mimicking eating in a scrunched-up position.

"And Brandon's sitting back, enjoying a nice relaxed dinner in this giant chair that he gets to sit in, with all the space in the world. I guess sometimes he's got a leg up on us."

Banks is listed at five-foot-seven and 153 pounds. But pressed by reporters, the kick returner-receiver known as Speedy or Speedy-B admits to some poetic licence.

"I've always been the smallest guy and I honestly probably weigh 149 pounds," he said after practice Wednesday at BC Place Stadium.

"I just feel any time I touch the ball, I have the possibility of going the distance," he said.

He did that twice on electric punt returns last weekend — three times if you count a 78-yard run back for a score that was called back due to a penalty — in Hamilton's 40-24 Eastern final win over Montreal.

Banks had five punt returns for a playoff-record 226 yards. His two TD returns — which covered 93 and 88 yards — also tied a playoff mark. The North Carolina native had three carries for 35 yards and four catches for 33 yards to finish with 294 total yards.

His second TD return was a marvel as he left Als players twisting in the wind.

"It was almost like Casper the Ghost because it looks like we were just grasping for air and he wasn't there," said Montreal coach Tom Higgins.

With kickers penalized for punting the ball out of bounds other than within the 20-yard line, it is hard to escape Banks.

Is his size an advantage, he was asked?

"It has its pros and cons," he said. "Because when I get hit, it don't feel good.

"But it does have a little bit of advantage. I've got a little bit of wiggle with me to get away from bigger guys."

One opponent he relishes seeing in his sights is the kicker — usually the last man to beat, a pylon in opposition colours.

"That's the best thing. That's like Christmas morning for me," he said with a laugh.

Banks, 26, spent three years as a returner for the Washington Redskins but came north last year after the NFL team did not tender the restricted free agent an offer.

"I don't think I got a fair shake," he said of his time in the NFL. "I don't think I got an opportunity to show my wide receiver skills."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Unique

"Brandon Banks is absolutely a special player. He just has a gift."

Ticats slotback Luke Tasker

FIFA allegations

Britain's Serious Fraud Office to look into World Cup bidding

A criminal investigation into allegations of World Cup bidding corruption could be opened in Britain, with authorities urging whistleblowers to come forward with information.

The Serious Fraud Office is pursuing "every reasonable line of inquiry, including working closely with appropriate overseas authorities," the government department said in a letter to a British legislator.

The Swiss attorney general has already received a criminal complaint from FIFA against possible law-breaking by unnamed individuals mentioned in the investigation into the 2018 and 2022 World Cup bidding process.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Phillip Hughes

Aussie cricketer in critical condition after struck by ball

More than 24 hours after being hit behind the left ear by a short-pitched ball, Australian cricketer Phillip Hughes remained in critical condition on Wednesday after undergoing emergency surgery.

Australian team doctor Peter Brukner issued a statement saying Hughes had further scans at St. Vincent's Hospital during the morning and that his condition was unchanged from overnight.

The 25-year-old Hughes was batting for South Australia in a Sheffield Shield match against New South Wales at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Tuesday when he was knocked out by a delivery by Sean Abbott.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vanier Cup. Sellout crowd expected in Montreal

Carabins quarterback Gabriel Cousineau THE CANADIAN PRESS

Playing in their home city will be a boost to the University of Montreal Carabins, but experience will be on the McMaster Marauders' side in the Vanier Cup game.

A sellout crowd of 23,500, most of them wearing Carabins blue and white, is expected on Saturday afternoon at Percival Molson Stadium, the Montreal Alouettes' home field on the McGill University campus downtown, for the Canadian Interuniversity Sport championship football game.

"We're playing on a bigger stage, for sure, but we're not feeling any more pressure," said Carabins quarterback Gabriel Cousineau, whose team downed the Manitoba Bisons in the Uteck Bowl at their 5,100-seat CEPSUM Stadium last Saturday.

"It's an opportunity to play in our city in front of our fans, and we hope we'll give them a good show."

The Carabins are in their first Vanier Cup after finally downing the powerhouse Laval Rouge et Or, who had won 11 straight conference titles.

The Marauders will be in their third Vanier Cup in four years. They beat Laval in 2011 in Vancouver and lost to the Rouge et Or in 2012 in Toronto.

Now they are headed onto their opponent's turf to try for a second title.

"We're excited to be on the national stage and play our best football in front of what know will be an exciting environment and a very blue crowd," said Marauders quarterback Marshall Ferguson, who will be playing his last CIS game. "The crowd noise plays into making it more difficult to achieve that goal."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Grey Cup

Hufnagel OK with players having sex

John Hufnagel is all for the Calgary Stampeders scoring off the field prior to the Grey Cup.

Hufnagel and Kent Austin of the Hamilton Tiger-Cats were asked Wednesday at the annual Grey Cup coaches conference the traditional question regarding their views on players having sex leading up to Sunday's game at BC Place.

"The recurring theme or words that have come out of my players' mouths from the start of training camp is to finish," the Calgary coach/GM said with a smile, drawing laughter from reporters in the room. "I would hope they would have that same directive this week."

Once again, Austin took the moral high road. Last year he politely declined to answer the question, while Saskatchewan head coach Corey Chamblin responded, "If they win the championship, they'll have a lot."

"I've been saved two years in a row with great answers by the opposing coach, so I don't really have to comment," Austin said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

AUGMENTED REALITY

Stuck on 12 Across? Scan this image with your Metro News app for today's crossword and Sudoku answers. It's OK. No one's watching.

→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You will get the chance to perform an unselfish act today. You may not receive any obvious rewards but you will feel good about yourself.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
No matter how many times you may have doubted your instincts in the past, don't doubt them today. According to the planets, you are in tune with the spirit of the times!

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Is what you are doing with your life meaningful? There may be moments today when your confidence wavers. Try to understand that whatever path you're on is the right one.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Act on what your instincts are telling you. It does not matter if everyone else seems to be moving in the opposite direction, it matters only that you trust your inner voice.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Make a wish today. You may not get what you want immediately but the planets indicate that by the start of next week you will see a major change.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
The mental boundaries you set up are far too rigid and need to be broken down. Think the unthinkable today. You may be surprised what you learn.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Even if you're happy with the way life is going it will pay to try something different. A new routine may seem odd to begin but you will eventually wonder why you didn't change sooner.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
What happens over the next 24 hours will confirm that it is a mistake to limit yourself in any way. Old ways of doing things are unlikely to make your world better — but new methods will.

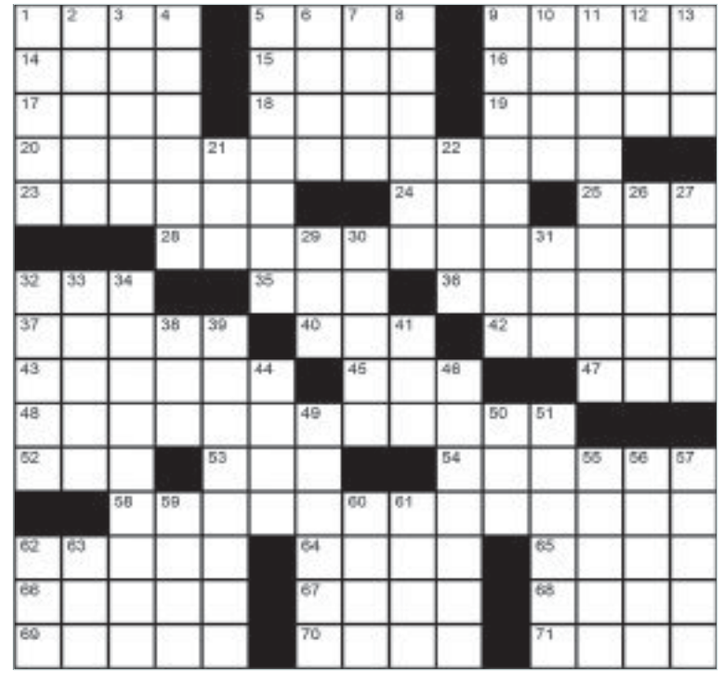
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
The obvious solution to a problem is not necessarily the right one and today's cosmic outlook urges you to try something that has not been done before.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
If you've been feeling left out of things, don't worry. What happens over the next few days will clue you in to what's going on and give you a starring role.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
A work issue may be giving you problems but if you stay calm and listen to your inner voice it will guide you to the solution.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Someone is determined to make your life difficult but you won't overcome them by direct confrontation. Find ways you can influence their behaviour in more subtle ways.

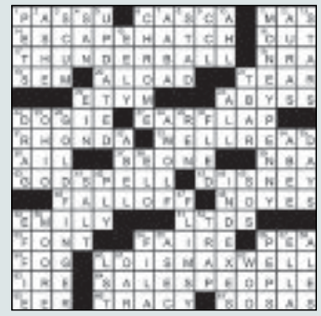
Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across
1. __ water
5. Pool-playing props
9. __ Thanksgiving Day Parade
14. Dial
15. Spoken
16. Basset __ (Instruments)
17. Peru neighbour, briefly
18. Attention
19. Where Joan of Arc was executed in 1431
20. Unwanted caller, often: 2 wds.
23. Lustrous sheets fabric
24. Ms. Harper, to pals
25. QVC equivalent in Canada
28. Master ensuite feature: 2 wds.
32. Culture/natural history attraction in Toronto [acronym]
35. Ms. Carrere
36. __ door
37. Belonging to Edith's li'l hubby
40. Edmonton transport service [acronym]
42. Ran, like the tortoise's competitor, say
43. Johnny Cash: "__ Prison Blues"
45. Revolutionary leader, __ Guevara
47. __ Lanka
48. La __ (World language organization that Canada, New Brunswick and Quebec are a part of)
52. Games org.
53. River inlet
54. Some curtains fabrics
58. Satisfyingly happy sounding Newfoundland town: 2 wds.
62. Grassland of South Africa
64. Math course, briefly
65. Bee's place
66. Barry Manilow's "_ __ It Through the Rain"
67. Shakespeare: "__ __, Brute?" - Caesar
68. Dr. __ Spengler, "Ghostbusters" (1984) role
69. Taboos
70. Actress Martha
71. Jean __, Wide Sargasso Sea author

Down
1. Timetables, slangly-spelled
2. __ _ week (Every seven days)
3. Have misgivings
4. Slacked
5. Type of oil or milk
6. Russian river
7. 'Grey' tea
8. Cookies bag row
9. Village known for its Saskatoonberry Festival each summer
10. Peek-_-__!
11. Royalty attendants
12. "__-haw!"
13. Amer. ID
21. Prez
22. Cleveland basketballers, briefly
26. Turn
27. Ms. Lauper
29. Cartoonist Mr. Keane
30. Tamarack __, Northwest Territories' official tree
31. Firearms org.
32. "Baby Beluga" Canadian troubadour
33. __ Munroe/Storm (Marvel Comics heroine)
34. Canadian songstress Sarah
38. QVC rival in The States
39. Plato's teacher
41. Even if, briefly
44. "Cold" by Canadian singer Rob __
46. "Free Your Mind" singing group: 2 wds.
49. Pitter-__
50. Lithium-__ battery
51. __/Or
55. Actress, Jennifer Jason __
56. Delegate
57. British WWII submachine guns
59. Taro root
60. Title for a Miss, in Spanish [abbr.]
61. Quebec __
62. Mr. Diesel
63. Comedian Mr. Philips

Yesterday's Crossword

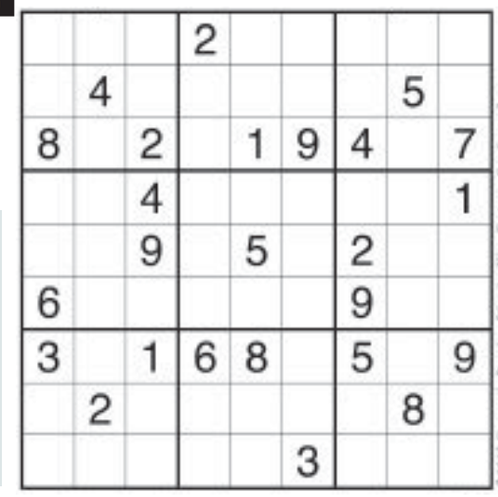


Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



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Yesterday's Sudoku

9	1	6	5	3	8	7	2	4
7	2	5	9	4	1	8	6	3
4	3	8	6	7	2	9	5	1
3	9	2	8	5	7	1	4	6
5	8	4	1	2	6	3	9	7
1	6	7	3	9	4	2	8	5
8	4	9	7	1	5	6	3	2
6	5	1	2	8	3	4	7	9
2	7	3	4	6	9	5	1	8

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